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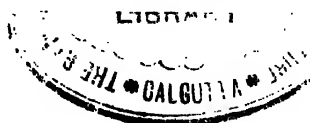
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THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

*The Reformation*



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# THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

By E. F. JACOB, M.A., D.Phil.

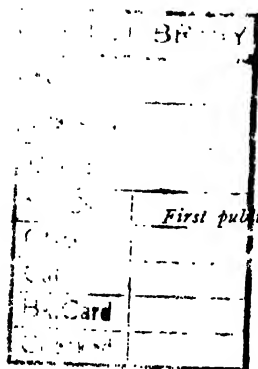
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THE  
HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE  
2. *The Reformation.*  
CHAPTER I

GERMAN KING AND ROMAN EMPEROR

If you take up a map of Germany for any period between 1300 and 1800 and compare it with one of contemporary France, a question will naturally strike you: What is the reason for this patchwork of colour, this odd medley of little territories? Why did such a litter of disunion spread itself here, while the more Western countries were learning how to become powerful centralized states? And yet, you will reflect, there must have been some curious coherence keeping the fragments together for so long: a memory, perhaps, an old loyalty, or some specially sanctified ceremonial, brought out like the state coach on state occasions; at any rate, a peculiarly strong effort of mysticism or self-interest to make that variegated system survive till 1806.

The answer to your problem is to relate the history of a great idea. The map merely portrays its wreckage. The colours that dazzle or fatigue you are those of the *corpus Germanicum* (the most ironical expression in

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history), the body of German states, or rather the collection of its limbs; but the idea, the spirit that once moved, organized, and united it was nothing less than that of the revival of Rome. The Empire which embraced these principalities was thought of as the secular counterpart of the Christian Church, whose boundaries it was supposed to share. Like Rome, it was to be universal; and it was to be holy, because of its fusion with Christendom and because its chief official, the Emperor, received a sacred character in his coronation at the hands of the chief spiritual official of Christendom, the Pope. European history shows how this idea took form and became localized in the German-speaking countries, how the policy of the Emperors resulted in destroying the hope alike of universality and of central control, how religious division and territorial separatism emphasized and prolonged the political weakness, under cover of which a rich growth of local institutions and economic interests made their appearance, and how through and beyond the convulsion of the French Revolution and of Napoleon's reorganization there still remained the consciousness of a common legacy, the sentiment of unity through diversity, that has been one of the strongest instincts of the German mind. This, in the briefest terms, is our theme.

The men of the earlier Middle Ages were devoted sons of a not long distant past. They knew nothing of the self-sufficing Greek state of which Aristotle had written. Apart from their own loose semi-tribal organization, they were acquainted only with the

memory of the universal empire of Rome. It was natural, then, that when the Austrasian Franks in the eighth century reconstituted the kingdom of their Merovingian predecessors and their greatest leader, Charlemagne, extended his power over the greater part of Europe, the revival of political power in the West should have been thought of as the revival of that empire. It was natural, because Gaul had a Romanized Christian population, and its bishops, the sole force making for order in the wild chaos of the sixth and seventh centuries, were imbued with the Roman tradition; they, in fact, took up and exercised in their dioceses the power of Roman provincial administrators, and their devotion to a universal religion transcended all merely tribal attachments. From a spiritual point of view, the Roman Empire was not extinguished in 476. It survived in the Church, taught by St. Augustine during the struggle with the Donatists to regard itself as the *Catholica*, authoritative because it was the universal rule of faith. All that learning and culture could give lay also in the Roman part, and its legacy, though by no means entire, the Church had preserved. Forgery completed the circle by attributing to the Papacy the grant by the Emperor Constantine of "all provinces, places, and cities of Italy or the Western regions." Power that was world-wide must therefore be Roman, must be Christian, and in 800 Charles the Great had the West in his hand. There was more. The idea of humanity as one society with two aspects, a spiritual and a temporal, was the thought which St. Augustine, most authoritative of all Fathers of the

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Western Church, was considered to have bequeathed to posterity. Each of these aspects had, to men's thinking, its single governing representative, a Pope and an Emperor. The coronation of Charles the Great may have been an acute move on the part of the Papacy against the Byzantine Empire after the schism of Photius had torn asunder East and West, or a subtle attempt to subordinate, in virtue of a ceremony, the secular to the spiritual power: but in contemporary thought it fulfilled the ideal condition of representation, it united the governed—that is, Western Christendom—in the single person of the governor, and gave currency to the idea of unity which ran through medieval political thought and found its highest expression in Dante's *De Monarchia*. "It is the 'unity' of the representer, not the 'unity' of the represented, that maketh the person 'one,'" wrote Thomas Hobbes. His words would apply to Charles the Great as much as to Charles I. of England.

The second re-creation of the Empire in the West (962) was the one to which our title "Holy Roman Empire" is normally given. It was the restoration, after more than a hundred years of gradual definition of boundaries and feeling after linguistic frontiers, of an empire centred in the tribal duchy of Saxony, the primitive, yet intensely self-conscious community that by its splendid defence against Eastern invaders, its use of Churchmen as its missionary colonists, and its cunning management of the other tribal duchies of Germany had brought peace and respect for law into

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the centre of Europe. The new Empire differed from Charlemagne's in that it was smaller (it was formed of the eastern and the southern part of the central division of Charles' domains when partitioned by the Treaty of Verdun in 843), was highly feudalized, and, most of all, combined two elements which were to come into mutual conflict: it was indissolubly bound up with the German kingdom, and it was inseparably connected with Italy. The importance of this conflict cannot be overestimated. Charles the Great had never felt the contradiction. A world-wide figure like Alexander or Napoleon, he had embodied in his armies men of all the warlike races, had published his capitularies or statutes in assemblies held indifferently throughout his empire, had extended his administration regardless of racial frontiers, and had dominated and controlled the ecclesiastical body of the West. The German rulers could not do this, for in between their sway and the epoch of Charles had come one of those periods of quick crystallization, when a new order of land relationships had come into being and feudal suzerainty taken the place of political subjection. The thing had been developing slowly in Charles's time: it came with a rush after his death. In the latter half of the ninth century, when the scourge of the Northmen or of the Slavs came upon Europe, men flocked to their nearest protectors, the local counts and margraves, commended themselves to them, held their land from them under contracts of mutual protection, and looked to them as their lords. Feudalism, the reciprocal relation of lord and



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tenant, unless it is kept carefully in check by systems of control such as were found in the Norman kingdoms, cuts across the political relation of ruler and subject, and so it was in the tenth century. The rulers of Germany had, therefore, to secure the allegiance of, and to rely upon, their great feudal nobles until they could create a sufficiently powerful class of royal administrators to take their places in the management of their duchies and territories. They had, therefore, a domestic problem the whole time in front of them. But—and here is the point—tradition dictated that they should come to Italy for the crown of the Italian kingdom and for the imperial diadem itself. In order to do this peaceably, they had to assert in Italy a superiority which in the early days diverted them from the task of national defence, and later on, more particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was to call down upon them local resistance as well as papal opposition—the one often stimulating, and creating opportunities for, the other. The story of how the Papacy utilized that local Italian opposition is one of the most interesting themes of history.

Our judgment of their success or failure will depend upon which element in their position we emphasize most, whether we regard their primary task and duty as that of German sovereigns whose business it was to secure and administer a firm, compact kingdom, or whether we think of them (as they also thought of themselves) in the romantic, idealist sense as the legatees of Rome, successors of Theodosius and

Justinian, wielding the temporal sword as representatives of the divine majesty on earth, and justified in extending their power more and more widely. That there was this conflict in their position there is no shadow of doubt. And accordingly to-day two schools of historians in Germany are debating the question whether the policy of those Emperors outside Germany can be justified. There is the "little German" school, holding views once voiced by von Sybel and recently upheld by Dietrich Schäfer and Georg von Below,\* strong champions of the need for powerful centralized government, with a Bismarckian horror of wide foreign commitments, that condemn the Italian adventurers root and branch. They have arisen once again in reaction against the "greater German" group, the disciples of Giesebrecht and Ficker, who point out how near to success the wider imperial policy came, how easily it might have prospered, who admire, as representative of the medieval German genius at its highest, the Titanic figures that threw themselves into the struggle with the Church. We may profit from both sides, without espousing either. They will help us to see how profoundly im-

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\* His recent work (1927), *Die italienische Kaiserpolitik des deutschen Mittelalters*, is mainly a criticism, sharpened by the eventful war years, of the views of Karl Hampe and Johannes Haller, who belong to the opposite group. The former's *Salier und Staufer*, the latter's *Altdeutsches Kaisertum* have been much read in the schools of Germany.

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portant for the history of Germany was the problem : Were German Kingship and Roman Empire mutually compatible? This is the question which the first three hundred years of imperial history was to answer. To them let us now turn.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GREAT DAYS OF THE EMPIRE

NOTE.—*The reader will find it very useful to have a good historical atlas ready to hand. The 1927 edition of "Philips' Historical Atlas," ed. Muir, Philip, and McElroy, serves the purpose well.*

THE true founder of the imperial power in Germany, though he was never crowned as Holy Roman Emperor, was Henry I. (the Fowler) of Saxony. The Carolingians, who had taken the eastern division of the Empire of Charles, partitioned in 843, could make little headway against the strong local feeling of the German tribal duchies, which were unimpressed by their pretensions. The most powerful, the most individual, of these was the Saxon dukedom that lay between the Rhine and the Elbe and was bounded on the south by the Harz mountains and the uplands of Hesse. A heavy-eating, hard-drinking people (if you wanted to insult a Saxon, you murmured "*Deus venter*"\* to him), with its own customary law of the utmost strangeness to a modern reader—the most disgraceful penalty it inflicted on a noble was to make

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\* "*Your God is your belly.*" This was what the Byzantine Emperor told Otto I.'s envoys when they came for the hand of his daughter, Theophano.

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him carry a dog—the Saxons nourished a peculiarly strong local patriotism and a real vein of piety which in the women flamed out into mysticism or authorship—the Saxon nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim is the first lady dramatist.\* It was the Saxon nobles joining with their Franconian colleagues who placed Henry on the throne (919). The new king differed from his predecessor, Conrad, in not trying to fight the other tribal dukes of Germany: he made terms with them instead. But his successor, Otto the Great (956-972), conceded less and took more. He got the duchies into the hands of his relatives; where there was likely to be trouble he insinuated, as a counterpoise to the big feudatories, *Pfalzgrafen* or Palatine counts as his representatives; and he set to work to create out of the higher clergy, the bishops, and abbots (whom he was careful to appoint and invest personally) a class of valuable administrators. These clerics he enfeoffed with land and made his own immediate tenants-in-chief, binding them closely to the Saxon monarchy. But the crown of Henry I.'s and Otto I.'s work was their defence of Germany against the invader and the policy of frontier colonization and expansion. In the west, Lorraine (consisting of Upper and Lower Lotharingia—*i.e.*, E. Belgium, Luxemburg, and modern Lorraine) was acquired in 928; but in the

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\* She wrote six comedies in the manner of Terence. "If you do not like them," she said to the bishops who were to judge them, "at least they have pleased myself."

## THE GREAT DAYS OF THE EMPIRE 17

north and east by 930 the Danes were attacking the coast of Frisia (Holland), the Wends, a Slavonic people from between the Elbe and the Oder were perpetually harrying Eastern Saxony, and the Magyars, a Hungarian tribe, were a greater threat than either. From 928 to 932 Henry I. fought the Wends with success, took Brandenburg, founded Meissen as a base for future campaigns, and then turning southwards penetrated into Bohemia, which he forced the reigning prince, Wenceslas, to surrender to him and receive back as a fief from the German crown. The Slavs were beaten at Riade in 933: the defeat crushed them for a time, but they came back in 937 and 938, and later attacked Bavaria. Not till 955 was the Hungarian danger disposed of by Henry's son Otto at the Lechfeld. The advantages won by the two Saxons were pushed home by the building of "burhs" (small fortified towns, like those built in England by Edward the Elder and Ethelfleda of the Mercians), by the creation of marks—*i.e.*, defensive areas—along the eastern frontier beyond the Elbe, and by a serious attempt to christianize the heathen population. New dioceses in the conquered lands were added to the ecclesiastical provinces of Mainz and Bremen, and the great archbishopric of Magdeburg was founded. In the glorious romanesque church of Magdeburg Otto I. rightly rests to-day. The eastern expansion of Germany had begun; but that it was to depend more upon the private enterprise of the higher clergy and the margraves, the successors of men like Hermann Billung, Gero, and Archbishop Wichmann of Magde-

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burg, rather than on the systematic effort of the German kings was due to the great entanglement of the imperial crown.

In 962 the Reich, as we shall now call it, consisted of the duchies of Saxony and Bavaria with their adjacent marks of Franconia, Lorraine, and Swabia. Burgundy (which meant Provence, the Rhone Valley, and modern Switzerland up to Basel in the north and the St. Gotthard Pass and Eastern boundary of the Valais on the east) did not come within till 1033. Bohemia was tributary from 950; the march of Carinthia, with its dependencies of Styria, Carniola, and Verona, was formed into a duchy in 976. Switzerland was not yet, for Swabia came down to the sources of the Rhine, the Splügen Pass and the south-western boundary of Bavaria, which included what we to-day call the Tyrol, with its important towns of Meran, Bozen, and Brixen. Germany, therefore, opened directly into Italy through the passes—the St. Gotthard, the Splügen, the Stelvio (by the Val Tellina) and, most of all, the Brenner. Below the high Alpine chain lay the sun-warmed plains of Lombardy, lay, as Vergil wrote :

“Tot congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis  
fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros.”\*

And beyond that, along roads white with dust, Rome, the heart of the world.

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\* “So many towns hand-built upon the sheer rock and rivers gliding beneath ancient walls.”

## THE GREAT DAYS OF THE EMPIRE 19

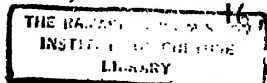
Thither, by the relentless magic of tradition, Otto was drawn in 962 to receive the crown of Italy and the crown of the Empire. There were good political reasons, as there had been when Charles the Great came: the Papacy had asked to be protected against the Italian King Adalbert, the Lombards against Berengar of Ivrea. For our purpose what matters is the relation in which the Emperor-king now stood to the Pope. When he encamped on Monte Mario outside Rome he swore that he would give back to the Papacy any alienated papal lands that he might recover and would bind anyone appointed by him to rule the *regnum Italicum* to be the Pope's protector. Now the Papacy was a state, as well as a church, and Otto fulfilled his promise by adding a fair-sized strip of Central Italy to the territories it had already received by donation—that is, the Exarchate of Ravenna, the Pentapolis, a section of Tuscany, and the Sabina, all of which had gone to extend the original *patrimonium*, Rome and its duchy. But, on the other hand, the Emperor became the Pope's suzerain, territorially, and it was agreed that the Pope's election had to be submitted to imperial confirmation. No deputy was appointed to rule the Italian kingdom, and the Pope then, while spiritually superior, stood as the feudal inferior of the Emperor in Italy. The Emperor's right in the papal elections was to last on till the middle of the eleventh century. *Per contra*, in course of time, the Papacy was to turn the tables on its secular colleague and claim the right of examining—and rejecting, if need be—the person of the elected Emperor.



After his coronation, Otto spent only two of the last twelve years of his reign in Germany. It was not that he neglected his own land; he had wider interests now. But the charge can be more justly brought against his grandson Otto III. Like Otto I., he found it necessary to get rid of a Pope and to deal sternly with the Roman nobility that threatened the safety of the Vicar of Christ. But he did not treat Germany and Italy as two distinct governments under one ruler, as his grandfather had done. He had one chancery for the whole Empire, and the union of Germany and Italy he still further strengthened by appointing his cousin, Bruno, to the papal throne in 966, and his firm supporter, the interesting Gerbert of Rheims, in 999. He felt himself a Roman; he lived at Rome. "Are not you my Romans?" he said bitterly to that fickle people, when they had turned round upon him; "for you I have left my country and my kindred: for love of you I have abandoned my Saxons and all the Germans, my own blood. . . . I have adopted you as sons, I have preferred you to all. For your sake I have brought upon myself the envy and hatred of all. And now you have cast out your father. You have encompassed my servants with a cruel death. You have closed your gates against me." In his own mouth lay the condemnation of an Italian policy that monopolized the Emperor's whole attention.

The generation of Saxon Emperors passed. The first members of the Franconian line, Henry II., Conrad II., Henry III., while they repaired and strengthened the Ottoman fabric in Germany, were still masters of

the Papacy, but, unconsciously, they did for the Holy See and for the Church in Germany, through which the new life of Cluniac reform was beginning to pulsate, the service that was to raise the priesthood to its great position in Europe as a power collateral with the Empire, a power that was to claim not only independence, but superiority in spiritual and temporal matters alike. The great struggle of Empire and Papacy was preparing when Conrad made his large grant of *Reichsgut*, imperial property, to the Church, and when Henry III., at the Council of Sutri (1046), purified the Papacy by deposing three competitors for the tiara and implanted a German from Bamberg. Yet at first Empire and Papacy developed evenly, neither at the expense of the other. Methodical German reforming Popes reorganized the *Curia*, internationalized the body of cardinals, reformed (1059) the system of papal elections (the cardinal bishops were to make the preliminary scrutiny), held synods outside Germany at which they published decrees against the buying and selling of Church offices and in favour of clerical celibacy, encouraged the attempt to reform and codify the Church's law, strengthened the hands of churchmen in the recovery of tithe. Methodical German Emperors spread German institutions eastwards through obedient bishops, transferred counties for safer keeping to religious hands, encouraged the smaller feudatories, repressed rebellion, built up a strong bureaucracy, and, without, added the great province of Burgundy to the Reich, kept Poland quiet, pacified the Danes, and continued the long watch



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upon the eastern border. How, then, came the explosion, the long war that was ultimately to undermine the power of the Emperor and weaken the hold of the spiritual authority upon Europe, victorious as the Papacy was to prove?

There is but one answer: The Italian policy of the Emperors and its reaction upon the internal conditions of the Reich. That this Italian intervention, to which the Emperor (to give him all due credit) was bound by tradition and by his position, proved as provocative as it did was due to the fact that in the first instance it struck against a particularly powerful upholder of the movement towards centralization and discipline in the Church; one who was not prepared to stand insubordination on the part of the German clergy or imperial interference in the episcopal affairs of Northern Italy. From the quarrel of Henry IV. and Gregory VII. arose a whole series of mutual incitements that underwent various phases, which it must be our object to explain. But here one caution is needful. We do not share the view that the Italian policy of the Emperors, while it was bound to provoke disputes with the Papacy, was for that reason doomed to failure. It created immense opportunities with their accompanying risks, and risks are often justified. We need not condemn the German Emperors for undertaking them, for this is to be wise after the event. The great projects of Henry VI. might have succeeded, for in spite of their size they were not impracticable, and the history of Europe have been permanently altered, by his survival. Had not Hohenstaufen policy

been blasted by his death practically coinciding with the election of the greatest of the medieval Popes and the renaissance of the *Curia*, the fate of Germany might have been entirely different. The greatest destinies hang by the slenderest threads.

The *first phase* begins in the reign of Henry III. with the vindication by the Emperor of his control over the See of Milan (1046) and ends with the termination of the Investiture Struggle (1122). We know it best as the period when the Papacy made its first full claim to the complete superiority of the Chair of St. Peter over the secular power, and through its use of excommunication and the release of subjects from their civil obedience fomented already existing hostility to the Emperor and sowed the seeds of permanent disunion in Germany. It is the period when Church publicists are advancing step by step to the view that the Church should hold her lands independently of lay control. They start with a limited programme which wins the united support of Pope and cardinals, and later, in proportion as imperial claims in Italy are urged and followed up, swing over to a more drastic position condemning all feudal relations entered into by the higher clergy. They particularly attacked the system of "private churches" (built by landowners on their own estates and filled up by the patron, and sometimes bought and sold like real property), and they were led on to a radical criticism of the relations between the Emperor and his henchmen, the bishops. They strongly objected to his conveying the pastoral office to the newly appointed

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clerk by means of the *spiritual* symbols of that office, the staff and the ring. We may smile at a quarrel over symbols until we remember that to the men of the time the symbol *was* the thing represented. Now in a missionary church where the bishop or abbot was the agent of civilized German culture and probably the most important colleague of the local margrave or count there was some excuse for lay investiture, as this process was called, and we cannot believe that the Pope did not appreciate this. But in Italy the Emperor's reasons for intervening in appointments were purely political. Great sees like Milan and Ravenna controlled Lombardy, and only through them could the Emperor maintain his hold on the Italian Kingdom or his superiority south of the Alps. Over Rome he had little control, for its populace had little respect for their "patrician" until the flash of German spears was seen approaching the city. The great conflict between Gregory VII., the noblest of papal idealists, and Henry IV. was fought primarily over an appointment to the See of Milan; it broadened out very quickly into a struggle between the king, backed by un-papally minded royalist bishops, and a German opposition party—discontented Saxons and Thuringians who took up for their own ends the cause of St. Peter. The excommunication of Henry by Gregory VII. played into their hands; and though by the dramatic penance of Canossa Henry IV. freed himself till the second ban in 1080, the Pope's release of Henry's subjects from their oath and the consequent encouragement given them to set up an anti-king had

## THE GREAT DAYS OF THE EMPIRE 25

begun the process of division in Germany. After Henry IV.'s formal deposition by the Papacy in 1080 there was a perpetual sore in the side of the monarchy; the existence of an opposition, half dynastic, half clerical, until the religious cause of friction was removed partly from sheer fatigue, partly owing to the Compromise of Worms reached in 1122 between Calixtus II. and the Emperor Henry V. By this compact the Emperor retained his control over elections in Germany, and though he gave up the investiture by staff and ring, none the less received the right to invest by the sceptre. On the other hand, he surrendered the claim, long fought over, to intervene directly in elections to Italian bishoprics. This was largely due to the fact that the Italian bishoprics were now becoming less important owing to the rise of the communes and to the fact that the bishops of Lombardy had given way and acceded to the reforming decrees of the Popes. In this first phase, the phase of the Investiture dispute, the Papacy emerged centralized and strengthened, with leadership and a policy: the Empire powerful still, but wounded internally.

The *second phase*, 1122-89, which centres in the rule of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, sees the establishment in the Empire of a powerful monarchy under the House of Hohenstaufen. The red-bearded hero who perished in an icy torrent while on crusade in Asia Minor, the Emperor who in German legends sleeps but to return one day, was not immune to the spell of the south. His ambitious attempt to exact his

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full regalian rights in Northern Italy led him into conflict with the Lombard cities, and in the end to his defeat at Legnano; and in order to recruit support for his expeditions, he had to give large privileges to the German feudatories, notably the *Privilegium minus* of 1158, the privilege to the Bishops of Würzburg in 1168 and later the grants to the enemies of the Welf, concessions which anticipate to a striking degree the grants made by Frederick II. With the Papacy, the helper of the Lombard League, he came into conflict more especially over his determination to vindicate for the Empire territory in Central Italy, which he proposed to administer by his own officials. The land, it should be noted, given by the Countess Matilda to the Church, but claimed in virtue of Barbarossa's descent (on one side) from Henry the Proud, Duke of Saxony. Though Frederick was forced in the end to come to terms and surrender his more extreme claims upon Lombardy and the lands in dispute, his officials none the less remained in the Central Italian territories, and his control there formed the basis of Henry VI.'s designs upon Italian territory. This Italian policy provoked in the Roman *Curia* a corresponding concentration upon the safeguarding of its lands and helped to secularize its policy, for when the Church states were threatened, every effort had to be made to guarantee the material basis of the Papacy, and the Papacy could not live on religious obedience alone. It had to have material support.

Meanwhile, in the Reich, there were two important changes. The kingship was becoming more strictly

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elective. In 1125 Lothar of Sapplinburg won the crown by right of choice at the hands of forty electors, ten from each of the greater duchies. He had no hereditary claim. The fact is important, and it was to be the aim of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, when it came to power in the same way, to reverse this and to make the kingdom hereditary in its line. But the day for this was past, and, as we shall see, the practice led to the growth of an electoral element in Germany, a development which was to proceed upon peculiar and far-reaching lines. In the second place, the power of the duchies as collective units had disappeared, and that of the families begun. The Welfs, the Swabian Counts of Staufeu (called the Hohenstaufen), the Wittelsbachs, and the Wettins had replaced the extinct lines. The Welf power combined both Saxony and Bavaria in the person of its great duke Henry the Lion. It was the Welfs and their tenants and allies that constituted the most formidable critics of Barbarossa's Italian policy, the Welfs that failed him before Legnano and brought upon him the disgrace that he was savagely to avenge. Henry the Lion, who held the two duchies, stood for the old sound policy of eastward extension. Due to him and Adolf of Holstein was a great colonizing movement along the Baltic coast, which resulted in thriving seaports, peaceful commerce, splendid church-building. Barbarossa could not at first afford to offend the Welf interest. He had to come to an understanding with them till the Lion's all-too-drastic methods had increased the number of his enemies throughout Ger-



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many and the time was ripe. Then the enemies of his Italian schemes could be smitten hip and thigh, Saxony and Bavaria confiscated (all but for the old Welf demesne lands round Luneburg) and distributed among the opposite party. The confiscation and redistribution of these lands is one of the most significant events in German history. It elevated a host of smaller vassals to the position of tenants-in-chief of the Empire and prepared the way for later separatism by the nature of the concessions made to these feudatories. Frederick Barbarossa's reign is so often looked upon as a golden age in German history that it is worth while emphasizing the momentous consequences of his five expeditions to Italy.

Before he met his death on crusade, Barbarossa had taken one step which was to colour the whole of the *third phase* of the contest between Empire and Papacy (1189-1250), the bitterest phase of all: the marriage of his son, the future Henry VI., to Constance, the heiress of the Norman kingdom of Southern Italy and Sicily. This brought the Hohenstaufen, already established in Central Italy, into the Mediterranean, where they caught the Norman infection of hostility towards the Eastern Empire. The ambition of Henry VI. (1189-97) was not merely to make the kingship hereditary—and for this he was prepared to make large concessions to the German princes—but by progressively extending his influence in the Eastern Mediterranean ultimately to secure control of the great Eastern Empire itself and unite the two realms in the House of Hohenstaufen. It was a tremendous vision: he may have

thought of himself gazing eastwards over the Bosphorus from the Emperor's palace in Constantinople, eastwards to the morning lands that were to be his.

"Thy dawn, O Master of the World, thy dawn!"

But his position in Italy was by no means secure, and had to be recognized first. With this in view, he had to seek the co-operation of the Papacy. He was even prepared, if we may trust Professor Haller on this point, to give the whole of his imperial possessions to be held as a fief from the Papacy, provided that effectual control of all Italy should be his. Cœlestine III. was very old, but very wise. The bait of a fixed income was tempting, but he would not give up the Papal claim to Italian territory. Henry postponed negotiations and prepared for the crusade which should strengthen his request when he came to re-iterate it later. He died before the great plan could materialize.

His death shattered the whole Hohenstaufen scheme: it ushered in a period of schism in the Empire, allowed Innocent III., the mightiest Pope of Christendom (1198-1216), to dispose of the imperial crown in favour of a Welf, brought about the almost complete destruction of Henry's administration in Italy and placed the Sicilian Kingdom at the virtual disposal of Innocent. Above all, the dependence of the Welf King of Germany, Otto IV., upon the Papacy allowed Innocent to wrest from him and later from Henry VI.'s son, Frederick of Hohenstaufen,

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concessions which extended the papal state to its fullest limits and forbade the union of Germany and the Sicilian Kingdom. The effect of the schism of the Empire, the double election of Otto of Brunswick (Henry the Lion's son) and the Hohenstaufen Philip of Swabia, was deplorable. The best elements among the princes and in the episcopate were in favour of Philip. But Innocent, once his mind was made up—and made up under fear of a Hohenstaufen revival—threw his whole weight on to the side of the Welf, and, by his doctrine that loyalty to a prince “opposing God and his saints” (*i.e.*, Philip of Swabia, who was excommunicated for the part he had played in Tuscany) was not binding, undermined the sanctity of the oath of allegiance throughout the Reich, with direst results for the future. This was the heritage which the young Frederick of Hohenstaufen had to take up, when the typically violent conduct of Otto in Italy led to his excommunication and the recognition both by Innocent and by the princes of Frederick's right to the throne. A Germany profoundly shaken and anarchical under the schism; the papal states a guaranteed obstruction to imperial policy in Italy; the obligation to divide the lovely southern island, the Paphos of the Western Mediterranean, from the Fatherland; these were the grievous facts that confronted the young man of sixteen, brought up in an atmosphere of alternate neglect and intrigue in the palace at Palermo, the ward of the Papacy. 16, 244.

But the greatest of the Hohenstaufen was here: a

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marvel of vitality, cynicism, and self-will, poetical, yet with the charmingly irreverent and amused mind of an academic scientist, passionately interested in things eastern, a worshipper of magnificence (he summoned his parliament to Melfi in order that the deputies "may see the serenity of our countenance"). This extraordinary man, who took a harem and a menagerie about with him on his travels, who came to be looked upon as anti-Christ by opponents and as a sort of imperial Messiah by supporters, was in reality a Norman Sicilian to the core; determined to create a solid state in the Southern Kingdom, with the rest of Italy playing the part of an obedient march, and a Germany quietened by concessions and administered by his deputies. Inwardly a pagan, he was outwardly orthodox. He pursued heretics, observed the rules. He had at first no quarrel with the Papacy; it was only when the *Curia*, as Dr. Ficker has shown, set about seriously undermining his power in Italy and intriguing against him that he was led into the supreme struggle which shook the whole of Europe and divided Christendom. It was then that the early compacts had to be reversed, and all efforts made to secure unity of action against a power that employed every device of spiritual and temporal resources to destroy the new monster. We need not detail the vicissitudes of the conflict; what is supremely important is to note that in 1220 and 1232 he was forced to grant the civil and ecclesiastical princes of Germany rights which, as Bryce says, "were wide enough to give the bishops and nobles practical sovereignty in

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their own towns and territories except when the Emperor should be present"; and thus his direct jurisdiction became restricted to his narrowed domain, and to the cities immediately dependent on the crown. The heart of the Empire had gone south. In future the Emperor will be dependent on his personal possessions, his own direct territorial power, for his hold upon Germany. And when the heart is broken, and the Sicilian Kingdom torn away, what remains in the north will be a splendid shadow of the past reality.

It would have been well if the Empire could have ended with Frederick's death. After Frederick's grandson Conradin had been defeated at Tagliacozzo (1268), all hope of retaining Italy was lost; and in the Great Interregnum the forces of separatism were turned loose in Germany, and the princes did not care even to have a German as Emperor. But while we deplore the results of the imperial preoccupation with the south, we must not judge them too hardly because they failed. Success was not far away, particularly in the days when Frederick was fighting Innocent IV. and the Pope had to take refuge at Lyons. It was a question of time, tenacity, and exhaustion. That the Papacy won was due to the continuity of its tradition, the enormous impression made by its claims upon credulous and loyal hearts, and the fact that its resources and allegiances were international in a sense that the Emperor's never could be. It could strain and strain Christendom, and Christendom would not break; but the Empire could not mobilize

these forces for such a duration, and could only keep them in being at a price; and that price was the concessions which brought about the disunion of Germany.

Upon these concessions were founded the private jurisdictions which were the perpetual challenge to the formation of a centralized state. Turning to our map we should particularly note the strength of the ecclesiastical principalities, intended by the Emperor to be the counterpoise to the territories of the lay princes. These ecclesiastical states were to be a distinctive feature of Germany right down to the nineteenth century. "The German bishops," said Napoleon after Campo-Formio, "are spiritual rulers and men of war. How do these titles agree? How are they grounded in the gospel? The Electors of Trèves, Cologne, and Mainz are always talking about Heaven, but their castles and riches are a hindrance to their getting these. Do you know that the gospel says 'the rich shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven'?" But we should also observe that the new families have spread outside the old duchy borders: the Wettins, for example, have occupied Slavonic lands. Germany has expanded eastwards, and is becoming an extended body of family and Church principalities, with every possibility of anarchy. Was loyalty to the imperial idea strong enough to tie them together after these concessions had been made? We must first ask what that idea was. In doing so we shall survey its mature, rather than its early, expressions.

## CHAPTER III

### *THE BASIS OF THEORY*

“‘Lo, now is the acceptable time,’ wherein are rising the signs of consolation and peace. For a new day glows and reveals in the east the dawn that is to banish the shadows of long-drawn-out calamity.” So in 1310 wrote the Florentine exile, Dante, to the princes and peoples of Italy heralding the advent of the imperial Messiah, Henry of Luxemburg. With no less clarity of conviction he upbraided the Florentines for their obstinate resistance to the God-sent opportunity, and with equally passionate entreaty he addressed the Emperor himself and bade him linger no more wasting his energies in the siege of Lombard towns. “Come now, break off this delay, thou other offspring of Esaias, take confidence from the eyes of the Lord God of Sabaoth who beholdeth thine actions.” Nearly fifty years later, after the terrible fiasco of Henry VII.’s expedition, another (but voluntary) exile stood before an Emperor at Nürnberg and adjured him to come to Rome. The “tribune” Cola di Rienzo, comparing himself to the forerunner John the Baptist or to St. Francis—for he would save the Empire, as Francis had saved the Church—and convinced that his prophetic fancies were valid, called upon Charles IV. to reform the Empire from the

Eternal City now in peaceful prostration at his feet. This time the Emperor felt a little annoyed at the idealism and the prophecies, and had Rienzo locked up. *Non tali auxilio*, he may have thought, though he believed as much as the wild Rienzo did in the divinity of the Empire.

While we feel the pathos, we shall marvel at the tenacity of the imperial idea. The early barbarian conquerors came to destroy it and ended as its captives. Long after the fall of the Hohenstaufen, when the real identity of Otto I.'s Reich had been lost, men go on talking about it. In the fifteenth century it was still a living spring of inspiration to a thinker like Nicolas of Cusa; but we are bound to be struck by the fact that its greatest expression in the Middle Ages occurs after the Empire had passed the zenith and the forces opposed to it—the Papacy intriguing with the Angevins, the towns with their nascent capitalism, the rivalry of particularist elements in Germany—had grown too strong. Dante, Marsiglio of Padua, William of Occam, all wrote after 1300. This can only be explained by studying the academic forces at work. In the early stages of the papal-imperial rivalry there was no lack of pamphlets and treatises on both sides: we have only to turn over the pages of Dr. Carlyle's *Medieval Political Theory in the West* to be convinced of the fact; but what was lacking was serious and disciplined thought on the nature and objects of a political society. These early outpourings demonstrate the superiority of the Empire over the Papacy and *vice versa* by arguments drawn from



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metaphors or from the allegorical interpretation of Scripture. The two lights of heaven, St. Paul's text in Ephesians iv. on the relation of the limbs to the body, the two swords offered to Christ by St. Peter are interpreted as designating the predominance of the spiritual or temporal power. Argument was by analogy, and essentially mystical. St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, Gregory the Great's *Moralia*, provided a great array of pegs upon which to hang conclusions. Furthermore, the commentators on St. Augustine, the most influential of the Christian Fathers in the Middle Ages, had popularized a depreciatory view of the secular power in comparison with the Church; how infinitely below the spiritual it seemed, when salvation, which was the supreme end of this life of probation, could only be achieved by means of the spiritual society! The heavenly city seemed the true end of humanity:

“Christe, palma bellatorum, hoc in municipium  
Introduc me post solutum militare cingulum:  
Fac consortem donativi beatorum civium.”\*

There was need of a little more Aristotle, and less Augustinian theory, to redress the balance and make

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\* “Christ, palm of warriors, bring me into this city after my girdle of knighthood has been loosened. Make me to share the reward of its blessed citizens” (St. Peter Damiani, *De Gloria Paradisi*). A convenient text will be found in J. S. Phillimore's *The Hundred Best Latin Hymns*, p. 45.

men think seriously about the aims of social life. The pessimism about earthly life had to be dispelled.

When Aristotle was translated from the Arabic in the twelfth century, and his *Ethics* and *Politics*, after recovering from the official frowns that had greeted them, were lectured upon in their relation to Christian theology at Paris, political speculation received a basis dependent neither on metaphor nor upon the *ipse dixit* of St. Augustine. We do not mean to imply that there was ever an independent study of political thought studied for its own sake in the Middle Ages, for it remained a branch of theology; but that the new method, learned from Aristotle, did at all events introduce some sort of criterion of the value of institutions by referring them to their ends or purposes. It was the great contribution of St. Thomas Aquinas that he took Aristotle's method and measured the value of things by asking how well they served their ends, or, as he would have said, how far they acted according to their natures, which he termed their *principia* or motive principles. Each motive principle was itself motivated by a supreme principle, to which it contributed and which it exemplified in some smaller or greater degree. Now if we transfer this idea to moral theory, the supreme good, for which all other goods existed, which they are all created to serve, "Just as the part is ordained for the whole," is, as St. Thomas put it, "blessedness" (*beatitudo*). This, it need hardly be said, is blessedness in a Christian sense, a future life of pure contemplation, wherein the Vision of God is perpetually enjoyed.

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But it was open to any thinker after St. Thomas had thus popularized the Aristotelian criterion to stop short at purely temporal happiness, and judge of an institution by its ability to promote this end, and we shall see how Dante availed himself of the opportunity. There was another feature also of St. Thomas' teaching which had a powerful effect, and that was his idea of Law, in which his keen social sense is clearly apparent. He was not an individualist ascetic. "Blessedness" is reached through life lived justly in a society governed and directed by law, and for him law is not only the command of some superior, but "a rule or measure of actions," dictated by reason, aiming at the common good, not at the profit of individuals (cf. *Summa Theologica*, I., ii., 90, 2). It is a reflection of the *ratio*, the reason in which both ruler and ruled participate, a reason which, just like the individual purposes, serves, and is set in motion by the "highest reason existing in God." The notion of individual ends, serving a supreme end, the notion of individual laws serving and "responding to" (that is St. Thomas' expression) a supreme Law are two of the great forward steps taken by thought in the thirteenth century. They can be applied to metaphysics, to ethics, to politics, as you will: and it is essential to bear them in mind before coming to the statement of imperial theory we are now to discuss. Those of us who care to go more deeply into the matter will see how they helped to dispel St. Augustine's despair about earthly society by showing at work in the world a reasonable purpose, with which the human will

could co-operate, rather than an inscrutable and compassionately selective one.

The noblest expression of medieval imperialism is to be found in Dante's writings. The Empire, he says, is necessary for the existence of civilization. The expression he uses is the untranslatable *umana civiltà*, "intelligent social life." This, he declares, is ordained for one end (note the doctrine of purpose), the life of happiness (*vita felice*, *Convivio* IV., 4). In what, then, does this happiness consist? The proper function of the human race, Dante replies, the function for which they were and are created (here is the notion of purpose again) is "continually to bring into play the whole range or potentiality of the intellect, for contemplation and for action alike." This can only be done in an atmosphere of universal peace. Now the Empire is the one institution which, as it transcends all other political units, can through the person of its Emperor unite the discordant wills of individual princes and keep them in tranquillity. The unity of the single Monarch's rule reconciles and pacifies humanity; but it does more—and here the theologian in Dante comes out—it makes the subject peoples most like to God who is himself one. "Therefore the human race is at its highest when it imitates the heavenly example, in so far as its nature permits it." It is at its noblest when it is one, and one it can only be when a single Emperor "spreads a universal peace o'er sea and land."

Each division of the human race, family, city, people, is a part of this universal human society. It

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does not stand (as Renaissance thinkers were to hold) independently. Each part of this highly and delicately articulated Whole can only play its part when it is pervaded by *justitia*, the spirit of righteousness, which Dante defines as "a certain straightness or rule that casts away the crooked"; and righteousness is most powerful in the world when it is exemplified in an entirely willing and all-powerful superior, who is the monarch or emperor. He goes on to argue that monarchy is the surest guarantee of liberty, which is based upon the freedom of the will; for the monarch's rule enables the human race to exist for itself, and not for another; and this is its truest liberty. But is the Monarch the Holy Emperor? The affirmative answer given by Dante to this question is the subject of a long historical argument proving that it was by no usurpation, but by lawful right, that the Roman people acquired the Empire, and the continuity of this Empire down to the present House of Luxemburg he tacitly assumes. The most powerful reason for the rightfulness of the acquisition is that the Romans aimed at establishing the reign of law, because they consistently sought the common good of the subject peoples; for this—and here comes in St. Thomas' definition of the purpose of law—is what law aims at. That the Romans sought the common good is perfectly clear from the fact that they established peace throughout the subjected countries. But is the Emperor, the successor of the Roman Emperors, supreme? Does he not hold his power from Christ's representative on earth, the Pope? Dante's answer is

firm and immediate. He holds his power from God alone. The old arguments drawn from the anointing of Saul, the moon shining with the reflected glory of the sun, or from the two swords are worthless. The spheres of Empire and Papacy are totally different. The Emperor, who holds his power from God alone, under God directs men to temporal felicity, while it is the concern of the Papacy to direct them to eternal bliss. "Wherefore man has need of a twofold directive power according to his twofold end—to wit, the supreme Pontiff to lead the human race, in accordance with things revealed, to eternal life, and the Emperor to direct it to temporal felicity in accordance with the teachings of philosophy."

Dante bases his whole argument on the idea of a human society aiming at perpetual intellectual and spiritual activity, and on the conviction that only in an atmosphere of peace, guaranteed by the Emperor, could this ideal be followed out by humanity. If we leave out the Emperor and substitute for him the process of international arbitration, we shall have something with which the modern mind will readily agree, always provided that the good will is there, and this is a large proviso. To Dante, just as to Thomas Hobbes later, peace was the supreme requisite, for the legacy of the struggle of Empire and Papacy was civic feuds throughout Italy on an almost unbelievable scale. But Dante may also have been writing in criticism of the nineteenth book of the *De Civitate Dei*, where Augustine describes the peace of the heavenly city. "Thou didst touch me," he said in his

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*Confessions*, "and I burned with desire for thy peace"; and again, "Unquiet is our heart till it finds its rest in Thee." The peace to which St. Augustine looked forward was not to be found on earth. In the *De Civitate Dei* he elaborated with a care exaggerated by his disciple Orosius the dangers and uncertainties of earthly life. He was at pains to refute the statement of Varro that the life of the philosopher should be one lived in society; he spoke instead of the "dark shadows of social life," the insecurity of human friendship, the mere physical and material barriers that separated man from man, the misery of wars. Because of this uncertainty the impulse to peace and order, St. Augustine held, was universally found in all animate life, but that impulse could never find its fullest realization amid human society. The struggle that went on within his own body, the law of God fighting against the law of sin, was perpetual and unavoidable here. *Nondum est plena et perfecta pax*; and if not within the individual himself, how then within the community? As we said above, this pessimism about earthly society had fastened upon men's minds. We come back to Damiani again in his description of Paradise:

"Omni labe defaecati carnis bella nesciunt  
Caro facta spiritalis et mens unum sentiunt;  
Pace multa perfruentes scandalum non perferunt."<sup>4</sup>

- \* "Cleansed from all its dregs, the body  
With the spirit knows no war,  
For the mind and flesh made spirit

*There*, indeed, was peace, but not here. Dante was not given to this deep and gloomy analysis. His theory is not the result of inward experience applied to politics, but of a study which has considered the units of society, as Aristotle did, as existing for the Whole, and proceeds from the conviction that man is a social animal. Its great merit is that it points to the possibility of an earthly community existing in peace with a universal authority to maintain it thus, and on its behalf, as against all Augustinian views, there is this much to be said: It is not by despairing of the world and cultivating the inner life, but by the earnest attempt to find some solution of the problem of war in and through society that the cause of international peace is advanced, though it may never be finally secured. It is not too fanciful to see in Dante's treatment of peace a far-reaching criticism in the interests of the Empire of St. Augustine's treatment of the same subject.

But we need not go so far as France to feel the contrast between the theory of the Empire and its reality. At the very height of the Empire the city of Rome was a very epitome of the contradiction. The

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One in thought and feeling are.  
 Deep their peace and their enjoying  
 From all shame and scandal far."

Translated by Miss Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p. 86. For St. Augustine's view, see H. Fuchs, *Augustin und der antike Friedensgedanke* (1926), pp. 45-55.



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*Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*, the pilgrim's book of Roman archæology in the Middle Ages, traced with devoted administration each one of its ancient sites and preserved the memory of the imperial past. "These and many other temples of the Emperors, Consuls, Senators, and Prefects existed in this golden city in pagan times, as we read in ancient annals, and have seen with our own eyes. How they show resplendent with gold, silver, bronze, ivory, and precious stones, we have endeavoured, as far as we were able, to describe for the benefit of posterity in this book." Antiquarianism of a curious, confused order went hand in hand with the legends of the saints to surround the Eternal City with a halo of treasured memories. Yet there were long periods in the Middle Ages when neither the Emperor nor the Pope was safe in the City of Rome, unless protected by a large body-guard. At Otto I.'s coronation his own sword-bearer stood by with the blade drawn; at the very moment when the Christian army on the Fourth Crusade took Constantinople, Innocent III. was living the life of an exile in the Apennines. The city which no conqueror, let alone pilgrim, had ever looked on without emotion, was like the Rome of the fourth century with the best buildings destroyed and all semblance of government and order withdrawn. She had no economic reason for existence, she produced nothing, was thoroughly unhealthy, and in every way quite unfitted to be the capital of a European Empire. Her people were turbulent and degraded: they lived on past memories and the plunder of pilgrims. Her nobility in the surround-

ing country or in their high towers within kept up a continual internecine war, but the presence of the Pope prevented the formation of a dictatorship which might have been to the advantage of the city. There was no middle-class between the populace and the nobles, such as had sprung up in Lombardy and made the towns prosperous. The character of a people may often be judged by its respect for its monuments, and here the most extraordinary neglect accompanied the high-sounding historical claims. The number of ancient buildings was very great, yet, as the historian of medieval Rome has pointed out, the feeling for works of art was so utterly extinct that no author of the time accords them a single word. "The Romans themselves regarded them simply as serviceable material. For centuries the city had resembled a vast limekiln into which the costliest marble was thrown, and then reduced to mortar. . . . Thus for centuries Romans sacked and destroyed their ancient city, cutting it and breaking it to pieces, burning it and transforming it." Yet under the spell of the past men will close their eyes to these contrasts, and even if they had been perceived it would not have occurred to them to set matters right. To Arnold of Brescia, to Cola di Rienzo, the shame of them came home, yet these had no backing but the temporary waves of enthusiasm, which are always strongest where the atmosphere is most decadent.

But did all people think of the Empire in this somewhat rarefied manner? Did the ordinary man, not the clever "highbrow," found its existence on the need

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for peace? The answer is, most probably not. He was taught that human society was one, and that there were two officials, one to look after religion, and the other to keep order and protect the Church. It is unlikely that the ordinary Englishman, for instance, in the Middle Ages knew more than that the Empire did not enter into his life. He would not know that Richard I., when he was captured returning from the Third Crusade, surrendered the kingdom to the Emperor Henry VI., though, if he lived in those days, he might remember the horrible taxation the country bore to provide the ransom. Henry II. might write in a perfectly orthodox way to Frederick Barbarossa paying him the compliment of saying that his land lay at Frederick's disposal, but there was nothing more than diplomatic courtesy behind it. The Empire existed like other institutions. It had its reasons, which learned clerks could provide. It was taken for granted, but it did not closely affect this country, even when Frederick II. married Henry III.'s sister, or when Richard, Earl of Cornwall, became King of the Romans. As for Roman law, it was lectured upon and provided, as now, a first-rate discipline, but it was for its method rather than its content that we valued it here. It did not enter into the body of our Common Law, though the treatises about that law gained greatly from the system of methodical definition which they learned from it. It is worth remembering that when in Edward I.'s time it was a question whether the great case of the succession to the Crown of Scotland should be decided "by imperial law or by

the laws and customs of the English Kingdom," one of the answers given was that Edward I. ought to judge it by the laws whereby he judged his own subjects, "because by these he is deemed to be Emperor." Very similar things could be said of France in the twelfth and thirteenth century alike. Philip Augustus would have been very much surprised if he had been called upon to pay anything more than lip-service to the imperial idea. Philip the Fair would have repudiated any form of subjection whatsoever, for his political theorists had been telling him that he held his power directly from God. Pierre du Bois, the most important of them, writing in 1308, regards the Empire as a national kingdom just as much as any other, and, as a recent writer puts it, "is untroubled by any conception of the Empire as an international power."

But we may go back again to our academics, since from them came trickling through to less thinking folk the slender stream of theory. To show how it lost its transcendental note during the fourteenth century, we may take Marsiglio of Padua, the great scholar in the service of the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria, the thinker "whose memory," one of the Popes said, "exudes the odour of sulphur." He said this partly because Marsiglio spoke in that tone of gentle, academic understatement which is so exasperating to people that are convinced, partly because Marsiglio held—a very terrible thing in those days—that the Church embraced the whole mass of faithful people, that all were alike Churchmen, whether they

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were laymen or clerks, partly because Marsiglio had very utilitarian views of morality. Marsiglio starts like Dante : Government exists for the purpose of restraining perverse wills and to maintain peace, but he is not so enthusiastic as Dante about its form. He thinks that "perhaps a kingly rule is the more perfect," and this, in spite of the fact that he dedicated his principal book (the *Defensor pacis*) to the Emperor. But the monarch's power does not proceed directly from God : it is derived from the people. The nation is the authoritative legislator, for only the whole people knows what it needs and can give it expression. But the community that legislates must have an officer, an executive agent, to carry out its commands, and for this purpose a ruler must be chosen. Election is the right form, and the man to be elected must secure the position, not by armed force or power, but by his qualities. Marsiglio does not attempt to decide the question whether universal monarchy is desirable. Kingship in his eyes is not sanctified by divine right, for it is an official position. As Dr. Poole has summarized it : "The king's power is limited in every possible direction. He has the eye of the people or of its delegates on all his actions. He may be restrained or even deposed if he overpass his prescribed bounds; and even though his conduct be not amenable to the letter of the law, he is still subject to the final judgment of the national will. On no side is there any room for despotism; in no point is he absolute."

What a contrast to the glowing words of Dante ! Marsiglio is at one with the Florentine in repudiating

the control of the spiritual power over the temporal authority, but in a generation (for Marsiglio was writing not long after 1324) the whole tone has changed. For religion, utility has been substituted. The Universal Emperor has become an administrator, not the unifier who makes the human race like unto God. The change is symptomatic of the conditions in the fourteenth century Empire. Rome seems to have disappeared from the picture.

Yet, for all this, the idea of the Emperor as peace-maker and as the fount of justice persists, and we must not take Marsiglio too seriously. Henry VII. came down into Italy because, as John of Cermenate said of him: "His simple mind was wholly set on giving peace to the world." Charles IV. took to heart the lyrical words of a Bohemian at the time of his accession (the Crown is made to address Charles): "For thee have the dark and labyrinthine ways of laws been seeking. To thee the tears of widows, of virgins, and of orphans, to thee the groans of oppression and dejection make appeal. . . . At thy approach gates shall open of their own accord, and strong walls bow their crests, because this is the manifest Will of God." Peace was the object of Charles' policy in the Empire, a policy often branded by the name of weakness, but really the result of a profound consciousness of his mission. Peace was the object of Sigismund's efforts at the Council of Constance, when he undertook his European tour to secure adhesion to the great effort to gain unity throughout the Church. Dante's wonderful saying, that "the Empire is born of the

fount of compassion" (*pietas* or sense of duty to humanity), was not an empty phrase to the idealist Emperor of the later Middle Ages. But the power to give it effect was progressively declining. If he had begun by being in theory the secular head of a society that in its unity represented the unity of the Godhead, that in its mission of justice and peace was the true successor to the Roman Empire, in practice the Emperor was ending as the head of a powerful family watched and restricted by other such powerful groups. Marsiglio came nearest to the truth, or perhaps the Psalmist in his wisdom :

"I have said, ye are gods : and ye are all the children of the most Highest.

But ye shall die like men : and fall like one of the princes."

## CHAPTER IV

### *THE DECLINE BEGINS*

WITH the death of the greatest Hohenstaufen the unity of the Empire disappeared. But it would be a mistake to suppose that throughout the fourteenth century the Reich was nothing more than a chaos of competing military and economic forces, held together by the diplomated alliances and intrigue of great families. It would be rash, indeed, if we ever thought of it as a strongly organized unitary state like the later Prussia under its electors or Tudor England, or as a great monarchy governed by a palace bureaucracy, as in the case of the Eastern Empire, where the ruler of Constantinople was both Cæsar and Pope. The Empire had no administrative capital at any time like Paris or London. There was never a strong central *curia regis* from which a Common Law could spring, never a "Parliament" such as existed in France. Palaces were built, but the court in the early days was itinerant and passed through areas each of which had its own customary code, while in Italy it was faced with a bewildering mass of municipal law and custom. The Emperors did indeed legislate for the whole Empire as a unit, and their decrees can be read in the "Constitutiones" of the great German series of the *Monumenta*, but we have still to ask to what extent



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that legislation was enforced and what permanent executive there was to enforce it. For the Sicilian Kingdom, Frederick II. passed a code of constitutions, which are strongly impregnated with Roman Law, but within thirty years it was being only very partially applied. The legislation of Barbarossa at the Diet of Roncaglia (1158) suffered materially from the defeat of Legnano and the Peace of Constance. The fact must be faced that the absence of a strong civil service, that right arm of the monarch developed by England and France, often limited the effective power of the Emperor's constitutions to the occasions when he was present either in person or through deputies—*e.g.*, as in Frederick II.'s conquest of Italy between 1232 and 1238. Local legal custom combined with the geographical factor and primitive traditions of independence to create in Germany a perpetual undercurrent of intransigence, which at no time was wholly lost. The history of the Reich shows this intransigent spirit alternately latent and victorious, and at no time, save, possibly, under Otto I., was it as completely suppressed as in Norman England or Capetian France.

After the concessions of Frederick II., the Emperors had to build up a strong "patrimony"—*i.e.*, private possessions of their own, in order to supplement their rights and incomes as Emperors, and at the same time they had to harmonize the separate jurisdictions by creating some sort of federal constitution which should take account of the facts and make the best of them. Lord Bryce has called this process one of "legalizing anarchy." It aimed rather at the elimination of

anarchy by upholding not the ideal of a national state (the point of view from which Lord Bryce judged the process), but of the independent yet co-ordinated growth of communities within the Empire. Yet so dependent was the new federal constitution, when made, upon the personal qualities and ability of the Emperor that in unworthy hands it had scarcely strength enough of its own to survive, and when a religious crisis of the first order came to test allegiance to it, its breakdown was complete.

The Hohenstaufen concessions had strengthened the hands not only of the feudatories in general, but also of the body which as the result of the Great Interregnum (1250-72) had gained a more than ever established position as conferring the title to the throne. Originally the German kingship was only partially elective. Choice was made by the warriors within the family of the leading tribe just as the Witan did in the case of the Anglo-Saxon Athelings. Under the Saxon and Franconian princes the throne became practically hereditary; the nobles were prepared to assent to the election of the king's son in the life-time of his father. In time, with the weakness of the royal line and the growth of the nobility, the process of election sorted itself out into a preliminary survey (*prætaxatio*) by a small group of the most influential princes, and the solemn declaration by all the princes (in order of dignity) of their choice of a particular person as king. The first part of the procedure became the most important, and in the twelfth century, as it has been said, "had ripened into a prac-

tically exclusive privilege of election." The actual date at which a *College* of Electors appears is a matter of some difficulty. In Eike von Repgow's *Sachsenspiegel* (c. 1230) six are named: three ecclesiastics, the Archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne, and three lay nobles, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg. A little later the right of a seventh, the King of Bohemia, is acknowledged. It will be seen that of the old duchies, the Rhenish Count represents Franconia and Swabia, and their household offices at the Emperor's court had descended both to him and to the Margrave of Brandenburg. What then of Bavaria? The omission was probably due to the fact that both the Bavarian Duke and the Palsgrave of the Rhine belonged to the House of Wittelsbach. The Wittelsbachs had acquired Bavaria in 1180 and the Palatinate in 1214. No difficulty occurred when the possessions of the House were united in a single hand, but when the Palatinate and Bavaria were separated, both claimed the right to elect, and the claim was naturally resented by Bohemia, which passed in the fourteenth century into the hands of the Luxemburg dynasty. These electoral disputes it was the aim of the famous Golden Bull of Charles IV. (1356) to settle; but before we consider it in relation to imperial policy, we must know more of the rival families in the century that preceded it.

The imperial crown passed successively through the hands of three families: the Houses of Habsburg, Wittelsbach, and Luxemburg, ultimately to come to rest with the Habsburgs again. The Habsburgs came

originally from the castle of their name in the Aargau, between Olten and Zurich, and were archdukes of Austria, Styria, and Carniola. Thence they spread westwards again into Carniola (1335) and the Tyrol (1363-64). Part of Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia, Croatia, and a strip of Hungary (west and north-west) fell to them in 1526, the rest of Hungary proper and Transylvania in 1699, and the Banat of Temesvar in 1718, while in the first partition of Poland (1772) they secured Galicia. Their first Emperors Rudolf (1273-92) and Albert I. (1298-1308) were prominent princes, but no more than that. Their policy was admirably suited to advance their House. It was restrained and patient, a policy of distant horizons; no following after imperial phantasms, but a gradual accumulation of territory until they became the real, not alleged, controllers of the Empire, indispensable to it because of their enormously wide connections. Though they were a family of the uplands, almost of the mountains, their lands were rich (they protected their Jews), were well-administered and orderly. These big-nosed men had a great family pride. When threatened, the various members of the House stood firmly together, spoke as one. The Wittelsbachs, on the other hand (centred in Bavaria and the Palatinate), clutched too quickly at power. They had the *bourgeois* mind, understood commerce, and were beloved by the Rhinelanders; but they were too grasping, too pig-headedly defiant to manage the papal court of Avignon, and went unbowed, but greatly damaged, under the papal excommunication. If the Emperor

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Lewis of Bavaria (1314-47) had really studied the way in which the Avignon Papacy, under French pressure, availed itself of the opposition offered in Italy to his Luxemburg predecessor, he might have hesitated before he engaged Pope John XXII. in a desperate struggle. Had he gauged aright the Habsburg family pride he would not have alienated them by forcing his son, the Margrave Lewis of Brandenburg, to marry the hideous Margaret Maultasche (who had just previously forced her Luxemburg husband to leave Tyrol), so as to lay hands upon her duchy of Carinthia, then in Habsburg custody. Herr Feuchtwanger, in his book *The Ugly Duchess*, has depicted in a few brilliant strokes the Wittelsbach policy in its strength and weakness; he is constructing an imaginary interview between Lewis and his son :

“The morose Margrave (Lewis of Brandenburg) continued to bring up peevish objections. Apart from the fact that this Margarete and all about her went deeply and fundamentally against his grain, it was certain that the Pope would not dissolve her marriage with the Luxemburger. As one man the whole of Christendom would cry out, scandalized, if he wedded the wife of another. The Emperor (Lewis of Bavaria) responded coolly that all his life he had had to put up with bans and interdicts, he could not let his son dispense with them. A Wittelsbacher, unfortunately, could not make his way without them.

"The Margrave shook off his father, leant against the table in vexation of spirit, and stroked mechanically his tiny moustache. The Danish Elisabeth had been no Helen; a prince could not woo mere beauty of form; he knew that. But this Margarete! the clumsy figure! 'Carinthia!' said the Emperor. The underhung jaw! 'Tyrol!' said the Emperor. The hanging cheeks! 'The slanting, prominent teeth! 'Trent! Brixen!' said the Emperor."

It was action such as this that let in once more the Luxemburg line. This third great family, of Low German stock (they hailed from Limburg and Brabant), had provided the idealists, the knights errant of the Empire. With the exception of John Henry, first husband of the Maultasche, they all had a heightened touch of piety or brilliance or far-sightedness distinguishing them from their rivals. The first had been the Emperor Henry VII. (1308-14), Dante's Messiah, probably the most spiritually-minded man that ever held the Empire; yet the Emperor who ruined his cause by deserting, under the strongest provocation, his original aim of impartiality and allowed himself to become involved in the party politics of Northern Italy, and finally faltered and broke himself against the joint opposition of Florence, Robert of Naples, and Clement V. acting under French inspiration: Duke John, who never held the Empire, was the gallant adventurer, Froissart's hero, who met his death at Crécy, yet had the qualities of

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a diplomatist hidden beneath the mask of a Don Quixote. His son Wenceslas, crowned Emperor as Charles V., had his roots firmly implanted in Bohemia, which he made the spoilt child of the Empire. He was the man who above all others looked facts in the face and saw the imperative need of stability in Germany and of a proper understanding with the *Curia*. He grasped the nettle: alliance with the Pope (Clement VI., his old tutor, who had long before predicted the Empire for him) on the basis of renouncing all claims over the States of the Church and her vassals, all claims to rule in Lombardy, and of a complete reversal of all the acts of Lewis of Bavaria; settlement of outstanding electoral disputes through the legal definition of the position of the electors, and to this end recognition of the right of the rulers of Bohemia, the Palatinate, Saxony, and Brandenburg to elect the Emperor; and concession to the effect that the privilege should descend by legitimate primogeniture to lay sons. By this grant, which forms the most important section of the famous Golden Bull (1356), these rulers were confirmed in their rights of jurisdiction and a number of additional clauses safeguarded their feudal positions. But the Bull gave them also responsibilities for the maintenance of the public peace, forbade confederacies between cities and lords, and was intended to serve as an instrument of public order. The last clause is particularly important. It proclaimed Charles' view that the unity of authority in the Holy Roman Empire rested upon the fact of the diversity of its nations, each distinguished by its

own character and language; a pluralist, not a unitary state. It is difficult to agree unreservedly with Lord Bryce's dictum that the authority that had once been his (Charles') was "parcelled out among a crowd of rapacious nobles," for this constitutes too sweeping a verdict upon the character of the opposition in the Reich, which we tried to indicate above; it underestimates the strength of the communities, the city life and the life of the ecclesiastical principalities, which had long maintained their independent attitude while bound together by a sense of common nationhood. The German did not proceed by the centralized methods of England or France. Charles' attitude is better expressed in the words of Father Walsh: "He preferred to see a Europe embracing a variety of national language, custom, spirit, yet intelligible to itself as a whole, because at one in will and creed and purpose, in a common life and art and inspiration, than a hierarchy of competing military and economic forces, held in precarious stability by diplomatic dynamics." What is true of Charles' view of Europe is also true of his view of Germany. But it was too optimistic. A federal constitution, in any shape or form, demands a degree of public spirit and a delicacy and complexity of machinery, for which there was no precedent. There was the consciousness of a common racial and linguistic bond, but it was not connected with government, but with commercial enterprise or with the conventions of German knight-hood. To make matters worse, the border territories were falling away. Even Charles' own Bohemia be-



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came in the last days of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth century the scene of a national Czech revolt which the Conciliar movement could do nothing to allay, and Bohemia carried Silesia and Moravia with it. Hungary was restless and revolutionary, and imperial power in Italy was a mere phantom. After Frederick III.'s time no German Emperor was crowned in Rome. Switzerland had begun to emerge into separate existence through a series of confederations against the Habsburgs and the German territorial nobility, and the success of the confederates against Charles the Bold of Burgundy set the seal on their endeavours. Burgundy was breaking away. First Dauphiné, then Provence, and finally the duchy itself, passed to the French crown, but the Netherlands had been added to the Habsburg demesne by the marriage of the third daughter of Charles the Bold to Maximilian, son of Frederick III., and later Emperor. What power was left to the Empire was a *Hausmacht*, the territorial preponderance of the Habsburgs, who under Maximilian held the Netherlands, Austria, the Tyrol, Styria, Carinthia, and lands in Swabia, Alsace, and Switzerland. Was it possible for the imperial, as distinct from territorial, power to be revived?

The Habsburg Maximilian did his best to provide a favourable answer. He established (1495) an Imperial Court of Justice and took the momentous step of formally accepting Roman Law as its code. He proclaimed an imperial peace, and strove to recover order. But he was thwarted by other parts of the

constitution, which he had helped to form or which he found already in existence. The chief obstacle lay in the constitution of the Diet. In it there were three Colleges of electors, princes, and cities. The smaller nobility and the knights of the Empire were not represented at all, and naturally felt aggrieved and expressed their feelings periodically by refusing to pay taxes which they had not voted. The princes and the cities were frequently at loggerheads. The dominant fact was that the territorial authority of the princes had taken root too deeply for any new measures to be effective. Equally hopeless, therefore, was the attempt to divide the Empire for purposes of administration into circles, a plan mooted throughout the fourteenth century, which took place at the Diet of Augsburg in 1500, when the six "circles" of Bavaria, Franconia, Saxony, the Rhine, Swabia, and Westphalia were created (four more were added in 1512), for the singular fact is that the circles were by no means complete; not only were lands belonging to the Empire, but in territories of its immediate tenants omitted. The German *Ritterschaft*, the knights who held immediately of the crown, had no wish to enter into relations with the princes of their districts, preferring the direct relation with the Empire. These omissions were fatal to a proper working of the system.

Then there came, quietly breaking up the old conception of the Empire as secular Christendom, the Renaissance. Dante's vision of European unity seemed folly to the concrete Renaissance mind in which

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"reason of state" was firmly implanted as a political principle. A new world had been discovered in the extreme west, undermining the unique value of the old. Monarchs like Henry VIII. could talk of "Empire" in a purely national sense. Yet there in the centre of Europe lay a strange conglomeration, large patrimonial possessions, smaller lay or spiritual principalities, and a powerful town life teeming with energy, alive with literary, artistic, commercial interests. Conrad Witz, Dürer, Cranach, Altdorfer; Nürnberg, Augsburg, Regensburg, with their stately merchants and resplendent gildhalls; mystics like Tauler and Jakob Boehme; scholars like Cusanus, teaching against the old scholasticism and discovering Plato again; the early presses, turning out their magnificent woodcuts; a new religious revival, the *devotio moderna* linked with humanism, spreading southwards from the Netherlands; a quickening of individual effort on all sides, a sense of expectancy and discontent with the skeleton of the past. What would become of it all? The Reformation helped to provide an answer already probable politically; it sent Germany still further along its path of disruption; as has been truly said, Luther completed the work of Hildebrand.

Yet, while by way of contrast we think of Tudor England and of France refounded by the diplomacy of Louis XI., we should not shut out eyes to one great side of German life which the weakness of the central power did nothing to hamper. The achievement of the Hanseatic League, and later of the group

of which Augsburg was the centre, was no small thing. The Northern German Merchants probably taught Europe more of the methods of trade than Venice ever did. They were a sturdy body before ever our own Merchant Adventurers launched out, and they had organized their "counters" or depots in favourable northern ports before we had learned the value of co-operative trading on a large scale. There are times when political weakness favours local initiative, and the fourteenth century in Germany was certainly one of them. Yet local initiative needs a *continuum* of power behind it, needs a certain amount of fostering and protection, and this could never be fully forthcoming. In the early stages of capitalist enterprise, the state has an important, if sometimes silent, part to play, and the German trading interests had no Henry VII. of England at their back. The Emperor could not play his part, as he had done in the early colonizing days, for a new distraction was at hand.

## CHAPTER V

### *THE PASSING OF THE EMPIRE*

THE Reformation was the beginning of the end. Over one half of Germany it destroyed what respect was still paid to the Emperor as the advocate of the Church and to the Empire as its secular embodiment. But it did more: it made possible the defeat of two powerful attempts to establish the imperial power on a new and unparalleled scale in Europe with the projected enthronement of a militant religious orthodoxy. In the period 1519-1648 the question of its revival was settled for ever, settled against the Habsburgs, who in the person of Charles V. (1519-58), the reigning representative of the Austrian and Spanish branches, threatened to overwhelm Europe, or in the person of Ferdinand II. (1619-37) bade fair to unify Germany again and stamp out religious dissent with the methods of the post-Tridentine Church. It will be no reflection upon the Catholic religion to say that it was for the good of Europe that these attempts were defeated and that the Empire remained in disunion. It would have been equally disastrous if Protestantism, especially the Protestantism of Calvin, had won the day. In an age when politics and religion were so intimately connected, the predominance of a single creed, catholic or protestant alike, would

inevitably have brought back a régime of universal intolerance. A historian of the period has put the matter well: "In almost every country the form of doctrine which triumphed associated itself with the state, and maintained the despotic system of the Middle Ages, while it forsook the grounds on which that system had been based. . . . The will of the sovereign, as in England, or of the majority, as in Holland, the Scandinavian countries and Scotland, imposed upon each country a peculiar form of worship and kept up the practices of medieval intolerance without their justification." What is true of Protestant countries is equally true of the rule of the Habsburg or of Philip of Spain. We may look upon it, therefore, as no evil thing for Europe that a division on religious grounds existed and was perpetuated through the division in the Empire itself.

From the political point of view, the great fact about the Reformation in Germany is that the individual states were given the task of deciding whether or not it should be carried out, and decided as their rulers decreed. This was secured by the defeat of Charles V.'s plan to subjugate Germany and to stifle the revolts of Protestant princes with his Spanish soldiery. His victory over the Schmalkaldic League (1547) held out the promise, but the conqueror of France and of the Papacy could not permanently suppress the groups represented by men like John Frederick of Saxony and Philip of Hesse. Abandoned after the Peace of Augsburg (1555) to the will of its separate princes, Germany divided itself along religious lines.

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Practically the entire north, with several southern princes and the majority of the free towns, declared for the new doctrines, while catholicism maintained itself in the south and west by the alliance of Austria, Bavaria, and the ecclesiastical princes. These two hostile groups, with their various adherents, remained opposed to each other until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 put an end to the wars of religion in Germany. A further result of the division of Germany into a *corpus catholicum* and a *corpus evangelicum* was the preponderance of the lay princes over the other members of the Empire. At the outset the Protestant princes had begun to prepare for a secularization of the ecclesiastical principalities, and the privileges of the towns became more and more restricted. This they now pursued, till once more an attempt was made to reintegrate the power of the monarchy. Wallenstein, on behalf of Ferdinand II., after conquering Northern Germany with his imperial troops, began to put into practice an edict of restitution (1629), putting the ecclesiastical principalities of the north at the disposal of the Emperor. But Richelieu, the great French statesman, at the Diet of Ratisbon (1630) united the German princes, Catholic and Protestant alike, in common opposition to the absolutist designs of Ferdinand II., and the courageous Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden crossed the Baltic and saved Europe from the plan. Richelieu's policy of depressing the House of Habsburg and keeping Germany united was made, of course, in the interests of France; but it was perfectly successful in its object of checking a

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revival of an armed Austrian monarchy under the guise of the Holy Empire. Thus, when a new settlement was imposed in the Osnabrück and Münster treaties, it was not unlike the Golden Bull, one that recognized the non-centralized character of German institutions by fixing as a permanent principle the territorial superiority (*ius territoriale*) of the princes of the Empire.

The Peace of Westphalia, which, in effect, legalized external intervention in imperial affairs, was of great importance for its rearrangement of the countries on the borders of Germany. It ratified a whole series of acts by which the frontier provinces in West and South-West Germany became separated from the Empire. The northern districts of the circle of Burgundy—*i.e.*, the Low Countries—surrendered the imperial alliance. France received part of Lorraine and a very large section of Alsace. In the latter country all rights and possessions of the Emperor and the Austrian House were under the Treaty surrendered, and so elastic were the terms of the Münster Treaty that Louis XIV., in pursuit of the plan of a "natural" frontier at the Rhine, could help himself to the whole province. (The rest of Lorraine did not leave the Empire until it was assigned by the Preliminaries of the Treaty of Vienna [1735] to Stanislas Leczinski with reversion of his fief to his son-in-law, Louis XIV.) But the Empire, thus diminished and pillaged by the armies of Louis XIV., played none the less at the end of the century a distinguished part in the recovery of the major part of Hungary and Transylvania from



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the Turks (1699); and, indeed, the Turk might have been driven out of Europe had it not been for the war of the Spanish Succession.

From 1700 down to the Napoleonic era the Holy Roman Empire dragged on its pitiful existence, neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire, as Voltaire pithily remarked. The Diet, which sat at Ratisbon after 1663, had become a conference of diplomats, each representing a German state which was following out its own policy, with the House of Austria sometimes opposed to all. In face of this weakness it was not hard for Frederick II. of Prussia to group round his state an opposition recruited in the Protestant states of the north and gradually to extend his power over the non-imperial territories to the north-east; while external powers, France and Sweden in the seventeenth century, France, England, and Russia in the eighteenth, could intervene in the diplomacy of the Empire and make it the theatre of great European wars. France, in particular, through the Rhenish and Bavarian electors, was able to maintain a strong party in aid of her designs. Though helpless and useless as a unit, the Empire was still a factor of primary significance, because in the contemporary policy of the Balance of Power the conquest or adhesion of its individual states to one or other of the great European groupings made a difference to the scale. Moreover, its members inherited or created for themselves dominions abroad: the Duke of Holstein got Denmark, the Elector of Hanover secured the English crown, the Elector of Saxony took part of Poland,

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the Archduke of Austria Hungary and Bavaria. But enthusiasm for the Empire itself there was none. It had all run into other channels—the rising national state of Prussia, or non-political, purely intellectual activities. Yet the pomp and ceremony which Napoleon was to view with his ruthless, if amused, eye still remained—so strong was the formal legacy of Rome: the Diet with its colleges, the Emperor's Aulic Council, the ten Circles with their membership of three hundred and twenty separate localities and jurisdictions, and upwards of fifty "immediate members" not included in the Circles. Joseph III., the philosopher king (1765-90), tried indeed to vitalize the phantom, but its day was over. It had to be laid, before Germany could rise again, and laid it was in Napoleon's wars. The petty principalities had to be broken up, the relics of feudalism swept away, and the ground cleared for larger units, artificial and unhistorical perhaps, but better administered and more easily subjected to the long-needed discipline of a conqueror. *Les états ne se fondent que par la politique*, said Napoleon, and proceeded to his task of foundation. First had to come the voluntary withdrawal of the states from the Empire, which he achieved by forming the Confederation of the Rhine; then the surrender by the Emperor of his imperial claims and dignities could follow as a matter of course. On August 6, 1806, Francis II. laid down the crown of the most venerable institution in the world.

The new organization was a necessary shock to Germany. Mr. Fisher has admirably described Napo-

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leon in the act of clearing away the cobwebs. Here he is interviewing the emissaries of the new kingdom of Westphalia in August, 1807, in the Tuileries :

“ ‘Religion,’ said Napoleon, curveting before the dazzled Germans on the high, far-striding steed of principle, ‘is an affair of conscience, not of the state. Small states are no good. You will have a great kingdom reaching perhaps to Hamburg. The soldiers are to protect, not to quell you. The nobility is not to count. He who distinguishes himself and shows merit is to be promoted. Kings are not for themselves, but for the happiness of their people.’ His eye then rested upon the ecclesiastical accoutrements of Abbot Henke, professor of evangelical theology in the University of Helmstadt. ‘What, are you a Protestant?’ Then seizing the golden cross which hung upon the Abbot’s breast, ‘What does that bring you in?’ he asked. ‘Two hundred thalers,’ said the Abbot. ‘It is worth while. Keep your religion. In every religion one can be a good man.’ ”

So perished, under the solvent of enlightened despotism, both the idea of unity and the fact of anarchy, which make up the story of the Holy Roman Empire in its decline. With the later history of the Reich we are not concerned. We have merely to remind ourselves that the extinction of an Empire does not kill the imperial idea. It was to live on in

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the Habsburg House till the fiercest disturbance of modern times, the Great War, with its accompanying revolts of the submerged nationalities in the Dual Empire, put an end to the divinity of kings. The new German Empire that was to rise at the end of the Napoleonic era was built not on Rome, but on the state which Freiherr von Stein and his helpers had raised from the dust in the War of Liberation. Prussia was to gather round herself the members of the Germanic confederation, to shake herself and her allies free from Habsburg influence and to keep it ultimately at a friendly arm's length, till once more the old legatee of Rome prevailed over wiser counsels and urged the new Reich into the war that proved the undoing of both. Yet the bond of common participation in the single Germanic Empire of the past is strong and may lead in the process of years to the union of the German-speaking peoples, the re-creation of a central European state—without the encumbrance of Italy. For it cannot be upon the basis of Rome. Long ago, before the Hohenstaufen fell, Rome had done her work of education. She had opened the eyes of the barbarian to the wonders of Latin Christianity: she had educated a peasant state into the finer arts of municipal life, she had shown tribal patriots the majesty of tradition and given them for the future the wider vision of a world united in peace.

We began this little study with a problem: Given, as was the case, that the Holy Roman Empire was based upon the union of Germany and Italy, was

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that union a practicable thing? The history of the early Emperors showed us how powerful a force the attraction of Italy was to prove, and, in the end, how detrimental to the creation of a strong German state : yet we have reason to believe that the *regnum Italicum* might not have been an intractable element in the Empire, had not the imperial designs there been opposed by the rising power of the Papacy. In the period up to Henry III.'s death the Emperors could devote themselves to the task of extending German influence and German expansion eastwards and westwards with small let or hindrance apart from periodical discontent within their own borders. But as soon as the Papacy became imbued with the doctrine of the complete autonomy of the spiritual power and the desire to separate the Church and Churchmen from all lay control, it was impossible for it to stand by and watch imperial intervention in the sees of Lombardy or to witness disobedience in Germany to its reforming decrees; it was still more out of the question when the Hohenstaufen Emperors tried to vindicate for themselves a domain in Central Italy, and to unite the power formerly in Norman hands, the kingdom of Southern Italy and Sicily, with the Reich. In the great struggle which marked the years 1073-1250, which we followed briefly through its three phases, the imperial power might have proved victorious under Henry VI., had not its success hung upon a single life, prematurely snapped. The death of Henry VI. opened the way for the greatest papal renaissance of the Middle Ages, the theocracy of

Innocent III. and the reorganization of the Church upon a stronger material and doctrinal basis than ever before, so that it could face its opponents with the hope of victory because of immensely augmented resources, spiritual and temporal, and the damaging effect upon Germany of a period of schism in the Empire. All the while, even in the heyday of their power, the Emperors were diverted from pursuing a whole-hearted and consistent foreign policy by the opposition of a papal reforming party in Germany and later by the competition of great families and the increasingly elective character of the Empire. When they could and did turn to it in good earnest, they were forced to make concessions which proved disastrous to any form of centralized authority. These took place with most far-reaching effect in the time of the Emperor Frederick II., apart from Peter the Great the most individually remarkable prince of this or any subsequent age. Yet the theory of the Empire reached its finest and truest form when the days of the Hohenstaufen were over and it was obvious that the unity of the Ottonian Reich could never be restored. The reason for this we found partly in the continued magic and fascination of tradition, the reverence felt towards the city of the Cæsars (though in the Middle Ages that city was wholly unworthy of its past), partly in the scholastic methods of the time, which culminated in St. Thomas' adaptation of Aristotle to Christian theology. It was these methods that enabled Dante to put forward a reasoned theory separating in their spheres of action the spiritual and temporal

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powers and founding the necessity of Empire upon the need for human peace in an atmosphere of enlightened intellectual activity. We observed how very much simpler a form of this view was held by the ordinary man, and how little the Empire entered into the lives of most people outside its boundaries. The growing reaction against the mystical or transcendental theory of the Empire was to be marked in the writing of Marsilius of Padua, whose view was largely utilitarian. This change corresponded with the contemporary movement of ideas, and though fifteenth-century writers still harked back to the old theme, the tradition of ancient Rome became a far more living force in imperial theory than the idea of a divinely willed secular power governing Christendom conjointly with the spiritual.

We next turned to the succession of imperial families after the Great Interregnum. The policy of each was primarily one of territorial aggrandizement: the Empire as such bulked smaller in their eyes than the creation of strong possessions to take the place of the jurisdictional rights and privileges granted away. The princes who had won the right to elect to the Empire pursued their own interests unchecked, and although Charles IV. had to define their rights and create a kind of federal public law for the Empire in the Golden Bull, the process of concession had gone too far for the Empire to recover respect and obedience, once his presence was removed. The imperial reorganization of the Emperor Maximilian proved of no permanent effect, and the disunion of Germany was

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decisively increased by the Reformation. This split the Reich into two bodies, evangelical and catholic, each containing their medley of little states and principalities, a division which neither the attempt of Charles V. nor the ambition and conquests of Ferdinand II. ever succeeded in bridging. The failure of their efforts prevent Spanish-Austrian or Austrian absolutism in Europe. The Habsburgs might increase their territories, might defend Christendom against the Turks, but never could they win from the Northern Protestant princes the respect once due to the Holy Roman Empire. The opposition to them upon their borders was utilized by France and by other Powers as an excuse for the acquisition of, or intervention in, their territories, and the divided Empire became a vital factor in the policy of the Balance of Power. While the Diet, with its cumbersome machinery, the Imperial Chamber and the Aulic Council continued as an elaborate phantom, the real power was passing northwards to Prussia under Frederick the Great, who had enriched his state at the expense of the Habsburg and Poland. When Napoleon, in the wake of the French Revolution, brought the Holy Roman Empire to an end, it was a ghost, not a living organism that passed. It was the Prussian state which in the end was to recreate German unity, not on the basis of the Holy Roman Empire, but on that of a nationalism unaffected by dreams of Italy. If there was any successor to the Holy Empire, that successor was the Dual Monarchy, which till its collapse after the Great War preserved the medieval idea of divine right and



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of the necessity of its rule over nationalities of non-German origin.

In all ideals of the past there lies some force which can refresh and enlighten the mind of the present. Rome has never, throughout the ages, failed to inspire men with the notion of public order and public service, with a love of grave and ordered beauty, with the sentiment of a uniform justice to be equitably applied wherever civilization has reached. Her greatest task was to impress these ideas upon the infant peoples of Europe. As she did so, they created her again in their own image, their creation the tribute of their devotion. The Rome they fashioned fell long ago, and no one has repented of the fact, nor will any substitute for her be sought. It is sufficient to remember her message and her lesson, best read in the address of Rutilius Namatianus to the city, which he was leaving in 416 :

“Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam;  
Profuit iniustis, te dominante, capi;  
Dumque offers victis proprii consortia iuris,  
Urbem fecisti, quod prius orbis erat.”\*

- 
- \* “Of alien realms thou hast made one fatherland;  
The lawless found their gain beneath thy sway;  
Sharing thy laws with those thou hast subdued,  
Thou hast made a city of the once wide world.”

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## 2. THE REFORMATION

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# THE REFORMATION

## CHAPTER I

### *INTRODUCTION*

THE religious world into which the Reformation intruded was certainly not one of Catholic concord and unity: indeed, the intellectual diversity of the later middle ages is too great for reliable generalisation. One guiding principle, however, in the elucidation of that vaguely defined period is to be found in the fact that both in religious and secular thought western Europe looked for guidance to Christian and pagan Rome, striving to preserve intact a great heritage, but constantly losing it or retaining it only in fragments. Men were everywhere engaged in the interpretation of originals, whether sacred or profane texts: the expression of independent opinion was, on the whole, exceptional. Even in Law, where continuity with the past was less broken than in any other realm of human inquiry, the Roman Law texts were used not as they had been formulated by Ulpian or Papinian, but as they had been commented upon and elaborated by a host of commentators. The "gloss," or comment, is thus eminently typical of later medievalism: the primary text, whether it be the Gospels or Justinian, is shrouded in a mass of commentary which may obscure or distort the original, and the scholar tended to surrender his common sense to the task of "scripturiant margin-filling." This process sacrificed clarity to subtlety: the result was that by the end of the fifteenth century there existed an enormous secondary



literature, all based more or less on originals, but embodying many strained and unwarranted interpretations of doctrines originally expounded with a measure of brevity and lucidity. Indeed, intellectual subtlety was one of the later medieval virtues: it was, unfortunately, not confined to academic spheres, but extended to matters on which the humble believer might have hoped for clarity and guidance. Most of the great reformers reacted against this literature, but they never completely emancipated themselves from its spirit: Luther thought in terms of the scholastic categories, and explained some of his most characteristic doctrines in language that would be almost incomprehensible to the educated man of to-day.

Thus while the religious and secular thought of the later middle ages was mostly embodied in a top-heavy edifice completely obscuring the original fountain-head of inspiration, so, too, the church as an institution succumbed to this process of over-elaboration. It is true that the primitive Christian conception of apostolic poverty was honoured in the mendicant orders, and that mere wealth did not confer the prestige which it has since acquired: but it is true also that strong secular tendencies had long been developing within ecclesiastical frontiers. A crude materialism was everywhere masquerading under Christian exteriors. A successful career in the church was generally the reward not of spiritual zeal, but of business aptitude. Relic worship provided endless opportunities for unscrupulous speculators: the Catholic Chaucer had already satirised the pardoner whose equipment consisted of "pig's bones in a glass." The Trinity was obscured in a dense cloud of saints in which the Virgin Mary was assuming ever-larger proportions. Wealthy bishops and cathedral chapters were degenerating into landlords, and too often harsh landlords: the papacy in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries included some who were notorious and even spectacular in vice. It seemed to many that the church

which had done so much to save Europe from barbarism, which had provided infant states with the rudiments of a political education, was now becoming an encumbrance, all the more objectionable because its maxims were so contrary to those of its original foundation.

There were other symptoms of decline. One of these was the attitude adopted in the later middle ages to the problem of sin. Since the thirteenth century a distinction had been growing up between two kinds or degrees of repentance preceding penance and absolution: these were contrition, a complete purging of the soul, and attrition, a more formal and less severe degree of repentance, not necessarily inspired by the love of God, but due to other causes such as fear. In the practice developed by the church, the deficiency implied by attrition might be made good by the addition of temporal penalties, so that the sinner who could not be certain that his penitence fulfilled the strict requirements of contrition might supplement his modicum of regret or apprehension by the performance of some definite act, such as fasting or buying an indulgence. Attrition, confession, and indulgence thus tended to be the three consecutive stages in the spiritual therapeutics of the later middle ages. At first, the indulgence could not protect one from the pains of hell, but it generally claimed to save a man or his relatives from the discomforts of purgatory, and so, while the existence and possibly very long duration of this intermediate stage was recognised, the indulgence was not necessarily a completely immoral device, since in theory it absolved one not from sin, but from certain of the penalties attendant upon sin. But in practice this distinction was not always observed, for it was easy to extend the scope of indulgences so that they dispensed with both penitence and absolution: moreover, indulgences might be construed as permissive for the future as well as retrospective for the past. It is not difficult to see how the indifferent Christian

might come to regard the indulgence as a convenient safety device whereby, for the outlay of a moderate premium, sin and comfort could, to some extent, be combined.

This commercialising of sin was a comparatively late growth in Catholicism: it is of importance for the study of the Reformation because it developed gradually from the conception of the church as the treasury of merits, a conception first defined in 1343 by pope Clement VI. in the Bull *Unigenitus*, wherein it was asserted that Christ had shed, for the redemption of mankind, not "a moderate drop of blood" (*non guttam sanguinis modicam*), such as might have fulfilled the strict letter of prophecy, but "a great flood" (*profluvium*), the amplitude and redundancy of which secured for the church an infinite treasure to be partaken of by men and administered by the successors of St. Peter. This treasure could not be diminished, because its original amount was infinite, and it was constantly being added to by the merits of successive generations of the faithful: as dispenser of the treasure, the pope was empowered to issue indulgences for the full remission of sins of all kinds. Once clearly defined, indulgences became an important element in Catholic life and papal economics. Pope Sixtus IV. in 1476 extended their sphere so as to include the living as well as the dead: it remained for pope Julius II., in 1512, to issue a Bull (*Liquet Omnibus*) granting an indulgence without any requirement of repentance or confession, but solely on condition of making a contribution to the building of St. Peter's "in money or in things that can be utilised for the work." The climax was reached when Leo X., in 1513, appealed for funds to assist the crusade against the Turk: contributors were not only absolved from sin, but the gates of hell were closed to them and the gates of heaven opened (*Claudo tibi portas inferni et ianuas aperio Paradisi*). It is true that the danger from the Turk was so great as to justify extreme measures, but

it is significant, nevertheless, that by the eve of the Reformation all the former limitations on indulgences had been removed, and the conception of the treasury of merits had been amplified so as to confer on the papacy powers generally attributed to the Almighty alone.

These papal claims do not mean that the papacy was extending its prerogative, but simply that it was taking advantage of that latitude of interpretation by which the whole system of Christian doctrine was sometimes distorted and even burlesqued by the dialectic of the later middle ages. There was little danger that in the fifteenth century the conception of a Hildebrandine papacy would be revived, for the old internationalism of the middle ages was fast disappearing before the advance of young nationalities. So far from losing touch with the new order of things, the papacy was really undergoing a subtle change whereby it was assuming the characteristics of a powerful secular state. There are several respects in which this change can be shown. Thus the cardinals were losing the tutelary and representative character which they had acquired early in the twelfth century. The Council of Constance had established their number at twenty-four, and had enunciated the principle that they should be proportionally representative of the different nationalities. But in the course of the fifteenth century this principle was gradually abandoned, and although, at each successive conclave, the claims of the Sacred College to direct participation in policy were renewed and extended, the popes, nevertheless, managed to elude this threatened dictation. They did this mainly by increasing the number of cardinals (there were about forty-four at the end of the century) and by altering its composition, so that it was recruited mainly from Italians. This process was completed by Julius II. (1503-1513) and Leo X. (1513-1531). The result was that, from a representative and cohesive body, the College of Cardinals became an unwieldy

assembly, composed mainly of compliant Italians. Responsibility for policy devolved on a small committee, the *Camera Secreta*, containing papal nephews and nominees. So greatly enhanced became this personal power of the popes that Alexander VI., on the occasion of one of his absences from Rome, delegated to his daughter, Lucrezia Borgia, the duty of opening and answering his correspondence. From an elective presidency the papacy was fast becoming a bureaucratic absolutism, employing an increasingly large number of functionaries, and finding greater difficulty in making receipts balance expenditure. The construction of buildings, the conduct of wars of aggression, and the expenses of a luxurious and ostentatious court caused increasing embarrassment in papal finances. Just as the secular rulers of the sixteenth century were constantly in need of ready money and prepared to barter, in exchange for it, crown lands and rights of taxation, so the papacy had to sell revenues, privileges, indulgences, and ecclesiastical offices for ready cash.

It is scarcely too much to say that by the sixteenth century papal administration had become commercialised: it was even to some extent a speculative institution, for many of its employees were paid, not a regular salary, but a percentage of the receipts. The age was one of great speculators and bankers: the Medici of Florence, the Giustiniani of Genoa, and the Fuggers of Augsburg were only a few of the merchant princes who retained half the rulers of Europe in their debt. In return for loans, popes granted to the bankers certain rights over secular and spiritual revenues: the lender or his agent came between the taxpayer and the Curia, giving a receipt to the first and a balance-sheet to the second: when Tetzels was hawking indulgences in Germany he was accompanied by a representative of the Fuggers, to whom he paid part of the proceeds. That the papacy had become a great and, to some extent, a very efficient business organisation merely

shows that it had succeeded in adapting itself to the spirit of the times.

Concurrently with this process, the papacy had acquired an important territorial power in Italy. Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., and Alexander VI. married their nephews and children into noble families of Milan, Naples, and Venice, and so created a new territorial nobility united to the papacy by personal ties. In 1506 Julius II. led his troops in person to the capture of Bologna and Perugia: with the help of France he won back the Romagna. Ferrara and Parma were added to the territorial possessions of this militant pontiff. In a country of disunion and intrigue, perpetually at the mercy of invading foreigners, the papacy was the one vigorous and independent state, a circumstance whereby Rome acquired a fresh lease of life as the world centre of art and culture; while the institution which had seemed to be passing out of date was, in reality, providing the most brilliant illustration of the new maxims of statecraft and policy. The old international papacy had been surrendered for a political and territorial sovereignty, with its armies of nuncios and diplomatic agents: from the "servant of God's servants" the pope had risen to a potentate, able to retain his prestige among brother princes by means of concrete weapons: from an impersonal and universal institution, the papacy had become Italian and spectacular, with all the resources for display provided by one of the most brilliant and corrupt civilisations that the world has ever known.

Such, in very brief outline, are some of the more obvious tendencies in the Catholicism of western Europe in the two centuries preceding the Reformation. There was abundance of independent criticism, but it was seldom co-ordinated. One of the earliest disputes in which the temporal power of the papacy was successfully challenged was that between Philip the Fair of France (1268-1314) and pope Boniface VIII. In this dispute the question of national autonomy

*versus* papal universality was definitely raised, and, in a sense, the Reformation may be said to date from the reign of this able and irreverent king who dared to address the pope—"à Boniface qui se dit pape, peu ou point de salut." It was as a partisan in this dispute that the Englishman, William of Ockham, the most daring of the schoolmen, produced his manifesto on ecclesiastical and princely power, wherein he impugned the papal claim to temporal supremacy, and argued that the priest is not solely a member of an international organisation, but is also a citizen having definite duties to the state. Almost contemporary with Ockham was the Italian Marsiglio of Padua, who entered into the service of the emperor Lewis the Bavarian, and when the latter was excommunicated by pope John XXII. in 1324 wrote his *Defensor Pacis*, a carefully considered treatise presenting a general survey of society and the state. He enunciated the doctrines that the function of the priest is to heal spiritual ailments: the heretic is responsible only before God: the church cannot properly invoke the secular arm in order to punish offences cognisable by the Almighty alone. Only the Scriptures as interpreted by œcumenical councils are of binding authority: in matters of faith popes are subordinate to general councils in which the laity is represented. Christ has appointed no deputy on earth: St. Peter has no pre-eminence over the other apostles: it is for the emperor, as supreme secular lord, to redress and reform abuses in the church. It is not surprising that Marsiglio was excommunicated. The Reformation had begun.

Similar views are to be found in the teaching of John Wycliffe. This fourteenth-century English reformer was convinced that the church had become thoroughly secular and corrupt: health could be restored only by return to its primitive poverty and purity, a drastic change that could be effected only by the state. He instituted a body of "poor preachers" and had the Bible translated into English for the first

time. The accusation urged against him in his trial at Lambeth (1378) was his assertion that ecclesiastics, even the pope, might be accused and corrected by laymen. Wycliffe was one of the most outspoken of the later medieval heresiarchs, and in his patron John of Gaunt he might have found a practical exponent of the drastic policy of disendowment. Some of his views can be traced in the Lollard movement, which was never completely suppressed in fifteenth-century England, but lived on among the humbler townsmen who, repelled by the spectacle of a wealthy and worldly church, found solace in the conception of the beatitude of the poor and humble—"little poor men, broken in heart and trembling at Thy word." The influence of Lollardry can be traced into Tudor times. In *The Supplication for the Beggars*, written by Simon Fish and circulated in London in 1529, may be read the most outspoken plea for disendowment ever penned in England: herein were expressed, in the most forceful and emphatic terms, the Lollard and Wycliffite views on the relations between Church and State. But the most important results of Wycliffe's teaching are to be seen in Bohemia, where a reformation was led by John Huss (1369-1415), who suffered at the stake for his views. The Bohemian movement was complicated by Slav hatred of German domination, and there was a distinctly revolutionary element in the teaching of the Taborites, or extreme Hussites. The more moderate (Utraquists) insisted, as a main point of reform, that the cup should be given to the laity: long before the sixteenth century a national reformation had been achieved in Bohemia: indeed, the Utraquists had by then become the conformists of Bohemia, and were being replaced in reforming zeal by the Calvinists and Bohemian Brethren. The fervid and variegated religious life of Bohemia was not quenched until the Thirty Years' War.

More co-ordinated criticism was expressed by the great councils of the fifteenth century. The main



causes leading to the conciliar movement were the existence of the Hussite heresy in Bohemia and the scandal of the Great Schism (1378-1417), which divided the allegiance of Catholic Europe between two sets of popes, the one in Rome, the other in Avignon. The experiment was tried of substituting conciliar for papal rule. The Council of Constance (1414-1418), one of the most academic of assemblies, restored the unity of the church by the election of Martin V. and the condemnation of the heresies of Wycliffe and Huss. It laid down the principle that councils were to be summoned at regular intervals. The Council of Basle, which began its sittings in 1431, contained an unusually large representation of the lower clergy, and was more democratic in character than its predecessor of Constance. Its avowed intention of reforming the church in head and members led to a breach with the pope, who summoned a rival council to Ferrara, and so began another schism. Taking advantage of the decrees on discipline passed in the earlier sessions of the Council of Basle, Charles VII. of France promulgated the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, the object of which was to curtail considerably the sphere of papal control in France and, in effect, to set up a Gallican church. Although French ecclesiastical independence was later bartered away by French kings, and finally ended by the Concordat of Bologna (1516), nevertheless, the Pragmatic Sanction preserved its halo as the Magna Charta of French national Catholicism, and remained the rallying-point for the various doctrines and aspirations passing under the name Gallicanism, all of which had for their common object the limitation of papal interference to spiritual and doctrinal matters. Thus two general results of the conciliar movement may be indicated. First, the councils familiarised men with the view that the papacy was not infallible and might need drastic amendment: second, the conciliar movement brought into prominence a new conception — that of the

national church recognising the pope as simply the bishop of Rome. The full application of this latter conception might have resulted in the withdrawal of obedience to Rome and the effecting of reformation not by theologians, but by statesmen. Such a reformation would almost certainly have been more uniform and less violent than that which actually came to pass, for rulers might, following the example set by Charles VII. of France, and more especially that set by Henry VIII. of England, have retained Catholicism while rejecting the papacy. But the papacy, the most versatile of all human institutions, triumphed over the conciliar movement and entrenched itself more firmly than ever in its Italian principality: it emerged even more powerful from the Council of Trent and, after three centuries in which it suffered the vicissitude of comparative obscurity, it imposed on Catholic Europe the doctrine of its own infallibility. The failure of the conciliar movement made the Reformation inevitable.

Only one more factor in pre-Reformation civilisation can here be considered—the great revival of learning generally called the Renaissance. What is its relation to the Reformation? One school has maintained that the later movement was, in many respects, a development of the first. Study of classical models, it is asserted, led men to reject as absurd many of the prejudices and superstitions of the middle ages: even more, according to this view, the new learning awakened the spirit of free inquiry and so released men from intellectual servitude to outworn creeds. What more natural than that the old religion should follow the scholastic learning into the limbo of forgotten absurdities? Another school has argued that, on the contrary, the one movement was the antithesis of the first: on this view the Renaissance inaugurated a great sanative process which was thwarted and eventually destroyed by the Reformation. In every country where the one supervened on the other, this school of thought traces the gradual spread of blight

and death over what was once vigorous life. Most books on the Reformation can be classified according as they take one or other of these opposed views on the relations between the Renaissance and the Reformation.

If historians were less free in their use of convenient labels for great and sporadic movements, this dualism would not so frequently be forced on the attention of the reader. It is possible that too much has been made of the assumption that the Renaissance introduced the spirit of free inquiry into Europe. The Revival of Learning meant very different things to different men and different countries: to one, it might mean an æsthetic paganism, sharply contrasted with the more austere requirements of Christianity: to another it might mean a higher standard of scholarship and so a means for the more accurate interpretation of classical and liturgical texts. Intermediate between the two extremes is the type represented by Erasmus—intolerant of monkish superstition and ignorance, and looking for guidance beyond the middle ages to the great Fathers of the church: retaining his faith but keeping his religious enthusiasm within scholarly and decorous bounds. The products of the Renaissance cannot be assimilated to any single or definite type. But this may be suggested of it, that it did not necessarily encourage independence of thought. For the authority of one period of civilisation, it substituted that of another: it was primarily concerned not with creating new sources of inspiration, but with assimilating old ones: for the orientalised Aristotle of the middle ages it substituted Aristotle in the original Greek—but it was Aristotle, nevertheless, with the tremendous authority attaching to that name in almost every sphere of intellectual inquiry, whether in politics, or logic, or biology, or the laws of taste. Freedom of thought as we know it to-day was practically unknown to men of the Renaissance, and this not because of repressive legislation, but because it was generally held,

even by thinking men, that revelation and knowledge were both finite: the one had been declared for all time in the Scriptures, the other had already been formulated by Aristotle and the great writers of classical antiquity. Neither Renaissance nor Reformation diverted men from gazing fixedly at a remote past.

It is this characteristic which most clearly distinguishes the intellectual atmosphere of to-day from that of the sixteenth century. We value originality and independence as intellectual virtues, and scientific progress is made possible by the fact that no discredit is attached to the disproof of a commonly accepted doctrine: we regard the achievements of the past, not as standard authorities for the present, but merely as stages towards a future apparently illimitable. This is such a truism that we are sometimes inclined to assume it to be true of the past. It is certainly not true of the sixteenth century. Then an opinion was valid in so far as it could be supported by accepted or reputable authority: disputants were not asserting their own opinions, but those of others: controversy generally centred in divergent interpretation of the same text. Erudition only deepened this tendency. To-day a man may be educated and yet know little of Latin or Greek: in the sixteenth century the field of education was much narrower; its vehicle was Latin, and its material consisted primarily of classical and sacred literature. In addition, Hebrew and Roman Law, which are now specialist studies, were then often included in the general curriculum, and these studies tended still further to enhance the principle of authority in human thought, because both are based on texts having respectively divine and imperial sanction, and both are eloquent of civilisations that were rigid and ruthless. So long as disputation was confined within the narrower limits prescribed by the pagan and sacred past, it was more acrimonious and more fruitless. From this point of view there is little to distinguish between the Renaissance and the Refor-

mation. The one revived Aristotle, the other St. Augustine. Intellectual resurrections do not necessarily advance human progress.

## CHAPTER II

### *THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY*

GERMANY, as part of the medieval Holy Roman Empire, had not been nationalised and unified like France and Spain, nor had it acquired a strong national consciousness like England. Divided into territorial states ruled by hereditary princes, of whom the most important were the Hohenzollern in Brandenburg, the Wettin in Saxony, and the Wittelsbach in Bavaria and the Palatinate, Germany was under the nominal sovereignty of an elective emperor who legislated in a Diet composed of the three estates of prince electors, nobility, and imperial cities. The empire, elective in theory, was in practice conferred on members of the house of Hapsburg, represented throughout the critical period of the Reformation by Charles V. (1519-1558). Germany was thus yoked with the hereditary Hapsburg possessions, which included the Netherlands, Austria, Styria, and the Tyrol. Bohemia and Hungary were still nominally independent kingdoms, but were already becoming hereditary Hapsburg possessions. The main political problems facing the Hapsburgs were defence of their western frontier and Italian possessions against the French rulers of the house of Valois, and defence of their eastern frontier against the Turk, and so the interests of Germany were subordinated to the political ambitions of the Hapsburgs, all of whom, with possibly only one exception, were fervid Catholics. In the pursuit of this policy the emperors were opposed and sometimes thwarted by the territorial princes, who

found in the upheaval of the Reformation an opportunity for personal aggrandisement. The intellectual life of Germany was centred in the cities, made prosperous by the expanding trades of printing, watch and clock making, and metal refining, and responsible for a wave of luxury and speculation which threatened to overthrow the old monopoly of the landed classes and to destroy the patriarchal provincialism once so characteristic of German life.

The German Reformation was, however, territorial rather than civic in character. The material for the study of social conditions in agrarian Germany of the fifteenth century is plentiful but diverse, so diverse indeed that by a careful selection it is possible to prove practically anything of pre-Reformation Germany. Generalisation is impossible when it is remembered that conditions were seldom the same in any two villages: moreover, while in the north, serfdom was the rule rather than the exception, in central and southern states a considerable number of the peasant villages were practically self-governing communities. It is true that harsh laws were not invariably enforced, but equally true that the absence of complaint is no evidence of favourable conditions, and it is sometimes forgotten that men may submit to the harshest injustice in this world if they feel sure of redress in the next: "the medieval peasant," it has been said, "would have burst but for his hope in the Devil." Were not the monstrosities and chimeras gaping from the walls and windows of his parish church or cathedral the most convincing answer to the questionings of the medieval socialist? The truth may be that the whole economic and social structure of the later middle ages held together not because of sound foundations, but because it had acquired a certain amount of elasticity and resilience.

If there is speculation regarding the material conditions of the German peasant, there can be little doubt of his piety: indeed, if one may judge from externals,

the age immediately preceding the Reformation was one of the most intensely religious periods in the whole of German history. Apart from sporadic tirades against priests, such as had already been voiced in Lollard England and Taborite Bohemia, the society into which Luther was born was one of deeply engraved religious faith, of devotion to the papacy and Catholicism, of saint-worship, relic-hunting, and pilgrimage-making. But a vigorous external Catholicism does not conceal the fact that many men felt the need for an alternative to the worldly and semi-pagan system into which later medieval Catholicism seemed to be degenerating. This feeling had already found expression in the preaching of a religious socialist named Hans Böhm, who, in 1476, from the eminence of a barrel in the village of Niklashausen, launched a fierce attack on the existing order in church and state. He advocated a crude mixture of Christian ethics and communism: the emperor, priests, taxes, private property were each fundamentally bad: one day all men, even the mightiest, would have to earn their living. These things, he declared, had been communicated to him by the Virgin Mary. Böhm's career was a short one. He was arrested by emissaries of the Bishop of Würzburg and died at the stake. But the influence of his teaching lived on and can be detected in the Bundschuh revolts later in the century, when a tied shoe was taken as their emblem by peasants who combined intense religious mysticism with a bitter hatred of existing institutions. Under the banners of their patron saints, the Virgin Mary and St. John, the peasant followers of Hans Böhm were giving inarticulate expression to that discontent with an outworn medievalism which was to find only very partial satisfaction in the Lutheran reformation.

Martin Luther was born at Eisleben in Thuringia on November 10, 1483. His father was a miner, and his early years were spent in a struggle with poverty. At the age of nineteen he entered the university of

Erfurt to study law, a subject not then regarded as purely professional, for it was linked with philology and the humanities. The young student, who was regarded by his contemporaries as industrious, dreamy, and musical, surprised his friends in 1505 by becoming a monk, a step probably taken as the culmination of years of doubt regarding the safety of his soul. Entering the monastery of the Augustinian Eremites at Erfurt he performed with rigid exactitude the requirements imposed on him: if prayer, fasting and scourging could save the soul, then his was secure. But his fevered mind obtained no quiet in these mechanical acts: not all his monkish austerities could induce that psychological state for which he was striving—the sense of salvation and divine pardon. There is little doubt that in these years Luther was abnormal: he was oppressed by a sense of his own and human sin: how could he reconcile God's righteousness with man's unworthiness? How could he be sure that his penances were inspired by love of God rather than by fear of hell? In Luther these doubts caused a degree and duration of anguish rare even in the most morbid of adolescences, and their existence has been adduced by several writers in support of the view that Luther was insane. This can be used as an argument against the Reformation provided one can define sanity and provided one regards all great religious reformers as normal.

This tortured period of his existence was ended early in 1508, mainly through the ministrations of Staupitz, the vicar-general of the Congregation, who showed him that the gulf between human sin and divine holiness could be bridged only by faith. "The just shall live by faith"—such was the formula that ended Luther's doubts and inspired him for the work of regenerating the religious life of Europe. This achievement of spiritual peace was followed by Luther's migration to Wittenberg, where a small university had recently been founded by Frederick,



elector of Saxony, who had staffed this foundation mainly from Luther's own Order. It was with a view to giving assistance in the teaching that Luther was despatched there. Two important incidents occurred in this period of his life. In 1511 he was sent to Rome on the business of his Order: there he visited all the shrines and relics in a spirit of devoted piety: he was almost overwhelmed by the tangible memorials to the traditions and achievements of the faith everywhere around him, but when climbing the Scala Sancta on his hands and knees he is said suddenly to have stood erect and turned back. He had recalled the words: "The just shall live by faith." To Wittenberg he brought back a vivid recollection of the luxury and corruption of Renaissance Rome. A year later he commenced to teach theology at Wittenberg, and it was the preparation required for this work that caused him to study St. Augustine. In the theory of Grace propounded by the great Father he found something answering to his own most urgent spiritual needs, for St. Augustine had become a Christian only in early middle life: the change from Manicheanism had been not gradual, but cataclysmic, and, in retrospect, seemed explicable only on the ground of divine intervention. On a psychological experience—now called conversion—was based a theological doctrine: human effort alone could not possibly achieve salvation: only by the influx of divine grace could the sinner emerge from the state of sin and corruption into which he had been born. As Paul had been overwhelmed by a "thunder-clap of grace" when on his way to Damascus, and as St. Augustine had been suddenly awakened to a new life by a voice in the garden at Milan, so Luther dated his emancipation to the moment when the full significance of justification by faith dawned on his mind. It is true that the scholastics had never repudiated St. Augustine, but they had built up a theory of salvation in which human habit directed by human will played an important part: contact with divine

agency was established by the priestly absolution. Luther's theory of justification by faith emphasised the conception of faith as a gift of God alone, faith regenerating and justifying by an internal experience in which neither priest nor absolution could have any share.

By the year 1517 his reading of St. Augustine had convinced Luther that the scholastic theology of the middle ages was Pelagian in that it ignored or underestimated the all-essential part played by God through Grace. It was from this doctrinal starting-point that Luther came to question the whole system of "works" on which the moral theology of the later middle ages was based: it led him to contrast the externals of religious practice with the vivid inner life of experience and conviction through which he himself had so recently passed. The one seemed to him little more than at best a makeshift, at worst, a vulgar fraud: the other stood out in contrast as the sole means whereby the sinner could obtain any conviction of unison with God. This introspective element was by no means new in religious life, for Luther himself had studied it in the medieval mystics, but he was revolutionary in the contrast which he instituted between the régime of the Catholic Church on the one hand, with its concrete and practicable requirements, its penances and pilgrimages, all parts of an elaborate system whereby the spiritual hygiene of sinning humanity was catered for by a large but exclusive body of qualified experts and consultants: and, on the other hand, the solitary and intense inner life of the spirit which stands naked and shivering before God. Most revolutions are based on some concisely expressed and easily understood formula: that formula was provided for the Lutheran Reformation in the words "The just shall live by faith"—that is, faith alone, without the need of adjuvants or "works."

An incident, small in itself, provided an opportunity for the application of this principle. In 1513 Leo X.

(1513-1521) began to raise money for the building of St. Peter's, and three commissions for collecting money were issued for Germany. One of these was directed to the archbishop elector of Mainz, who had borrowed a large sum from the Fuggers of Augsburg in order to pay for his pallium. An arrangement was made whereby the Fuggers were to receive half of the proceeds of the indulgence in the provinces of Mainz and Magdeburg, while the other half was to be paid over to the pope. A Dominican monk named John Tetzel, who had had some experience in these matters, was selected to preach the indulgence in the archiepiscopal dominions, a task which he performed with thoroughly business methods, for not only was he himself an eloquent advertiser of his wares, but he provided parish priests with specimen sermons with which to influence their flocks: "so soon as the coin rang in the chest," wrote a contemporary, "the soul for whom the money was paid would go straightway to heaven." A number of townsmen of Wittenberg purchased indulgence tickets, and reports of Tetzel's doings reached Luther's ears. He was stung to action by what he considered an impudent fraud, but the action he took was that of a professor of theology, not that of an agitator. When he fastened his Ninety-Five Theses to the church door at Wittenberg he was adopting a strictly academic and non-popular method of inviting discussion, for the Theses were expressed in Latin and were simply statements of abstract doctrine which Luther was prepared to defend in public debate or by correspondence: moreover, the church was the University Church of Wittenberg, and the appeal was only to those qualified to argue on scholastic theology.

The main purpose of Luther's action was not so much to attack the indulgence system generally as the abuse which had developed from it—namely, the confusion between penalties prescribed for sin and the sin itself. The church, he argued, cannot usurp the place of God, nor can it claim to remove what is irremovable

except by Him: punishment for sin is a divine prerogative, and an indulgence can remove only an ecclesiastical penalty. True repentance makes an indulgence superfluous. The merits of the church work independently of papal intervention, and the pope can dispense only with those penalties which he himself has imposed.

These doctrines created an unexpected commotion. The Theses were translated into German and read by everyone, while the sale of Tetzels wares fell off. Luther himself, surprised by the interest which his act had created in Germany and western Europe, soon found himself involved in something more serious than an academic debate. Leo X. (a Medici), as a member of a great banking family, was concerned primarily with the financial aspects of the matter; he saw clearly that if he was to retain his large revenues from indulgences, this contentious monk must be silenced. In July, 1518, he summoned Luther to Rome, but Frederick the elector of Saxony intervened on Luther's behalf and obtained the concession that the matter should first be investigated in Germany. The settlement of the matter was entrusted to cardinal Cajetan, the papal legate, who, however, failed, in an interview at Augsburg, to induce Luther to recant his Fifty-Eighth Thesis—that the merits of Christ operate independently of papal intervention. But by now (October, 1518) the Theses had permeated to every corner of Germany, and Luther realised that, both in his own Order and out of it, he was assured of a large measure of popular support. The aid of the Press was invoked on both sides, and it may be noted that but for this medium the Lutheran doctrines would probably never have gone far beyond Wittenberg: for the printers of Germany were mostly in favour of the new doctrines and, while they set up accurately and expeditiously the numerous manifestos of the Wittenberg professor, they showed less respect for the indignant replies of his antagonists. Greater variety in the size of

volumes helped to emphasise this advantage. A silent revolution had been effected when, in the fifteenth century, the printed book took the place of the manuscript: an almost equally great revolution was accomplished when the large folio was accompanied by the quarto and duodecimo, for men could now read by the fields or by the wayside. The initial success of the Lutheran Reformation was perhaps the first tribute to the power of the Press.

The Theses had not been intended as a deliberate challenge to the papacy, which Luther, in common with his German contemporaries, had always held in deepest reverence, but it was soon clear that the attack on a debased conception of indulgences brought into question the whole question of papal supremacy. Lorenzo Valla had already in the preceding century exposed the forgery of the so-called "Donation of Constantine" whereby the papacy was supposed to have acquired temporal power in western Europe: Luther's historical studies now led him to conclude that the power of the pope in Germany was based largely on sources which might be regarded as highly questionable. This advance in Luther's views is seen at the Leipzig Disputation in 1519, when he had to defend himself against the redoubtable controversialist, John Eck, who cleverly forced his adversary to abandon his non-committal attitude and range himself with heretics of the past, since it was not difficult to show that Hussitism and Lutheranism had a great deal in common. This public dispute helped to clear the air, because it led to the clear enunciation of the historical theory that the supremacy of the papacy was a comparatively modern institution, having no warrant either in the teaching of Christ or in the practice of the early church. This view appeared to follow inevitably from a dispassionate study of the history of the western church, and its assertion won for Luther the temporary support of the Christian humanists. With the conviction of a man who has suddenly discovered a

fraud (a fraud which had already been exposed), Luther, in 1520, wrote his three greatest books: *Concerning Christian Liberty*, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, and *On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. In these treatises was proclaimed in emphatic terms the superfluity of all external aids to salvation and the principle of the priesthood of all believers. The doctrine of Transubstantiation he denounced as a monstrosity: no miracle, he declared, was performed by the priest, for Christ's body, in Luther's own scholastic language, was everywhere present as "a substance extended in space," or, in more comprehensible language, it was present in the elements as the sword is in the scabbard and as heat is present in hot iron. The complete abolition of papal power in Germany: the establishment of a national church under its own council: radical reform of the religious orders, and abolition of clerical celibacy: limitation of pilgrimages and extension of facilities for divorce—these are some of the most concrete demands of the three Reformation treatises of 1520. It would, no doubt, be possible to show that none of these demands was original, and that all of them had at some time or another been already formulated, but never before had they been brought together and expressed in a manner that could be comprehended by the "ordinary" man.

These doctrines, enumerated among forty-one specified heresies, were officially condemned by the Bull *Exsurge Domine*. The sweeping indictments of this document and the tactlessness shown in its circulation served to win for Lutheranism the support of all the anti-papalist elements in Germany, and on December 10, 1520, the Bull was publicly burned by the students of Wittenberg. There could be no clearer challenge to Rome. But as yet, religious dissent was unorganised and ill-defined; Luther's solitary supporter among the princes was Frederick, elector of Saxony, who, though not converted to Lutheran opinions until

1524, had long shown interest and sympathy in his protégé, believing that he might one day be an instrument for effecting the spiritual regeneration of Germany.

In the progress of the Reformation an important part was played by the public debate, the object of which was not to enable the audience to obtain the material requisite for coming to a decision, but to secure the refutation of one of the disputants. As refutation might entail death for heresy, there generally prevailed at these functions an atmosphere of acrimoniousness and tenseness unfavourable to the fair exposition of a new doctrine, and the test was often as much physical as mental, for the debate might last many hours. Luther was not at a disadvantage in these respects, for he had robust health and a great power of invective, both in German and Latin. He had to face a formidable audience when he appeared before the young Charles V. at a Diet of the empire held at Worms in 1521. Charles himself was not averse from reform: he was no bigot: but he was temperamentally Catholic in his acceptance of the essential doctrines and his belief in the papacy as an institution. He might besiege the pope and sack Rome, but these were acts of policy, not of conviction. It is doubtful whether he understood the full implication of the Lutheran doctrines, and it seems likely that he viewed the question of reform from the point of view of the statesman rather than from that of the thinker.

The German Diet was an amorphous and dilatory body easily susceptible to the influence of intrigue: and intrigue was unsparingly employed at the Diet of Worms. The emperor was won over by the exhortations of Alexander, the papal legate; moreover, three of the electoral princes—the archbishops of Cologne and Mainz and the elector of Brandenburg—were declared enemies of Luther. Luther, however, held his ground and appealed from the decisions of popes and councils to the authority of the Scriptures. Conferences

were held in the hope of reconciling the emperor's belief in the infallibility of general councils with Luther's appeals to the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone. Irritated by the reformer's refusal to compromise, Charles declared himself with more than usual vehemence, and Luther was ordered to return to Wittenberg while the Ban of Empire was being drawn up. This Ban, or condemnation, was signed on May 26, 1521, and constituted the imperial declaration of war on the new faith, for it ordered the suppression of Lutheran doctrines and confiscation for non-compliance. To the local powers was entrusted the duty of putting the edict into execution, but the princes, whatever their personal convictions, knew that German feeling was thoroughly aroused and that its suppression would necessitate sacrifices in men and money which they could ill afford. Meanwhile, Luther himself was removed out of harm's way by agents of the elector of Saxony and hidden in the Wartburg.

The years between 1521 and 1524 may be considered the culminating point in the Lutheran Reformation. Division and disillusion are the inevitable aftermaths of all great revolutions: they came speedily to Germany. During the reformer's absence, Wittenberg was given over to an excess of radicalism, which brought some discredit on the new faith. Under the leadership of Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt, drastic alterations were made in the Mass, many of the secular clergy married, and an indiscriminate campaign was launched against every practice or doctrine savouring of the old faith. The disorder was intensified by the arrival of two deranged weavers, known as the Zwickau Prophets, who objected to infant baptism, claimed to be above even the Scriptures and asserted a monopoly of prophecy. Luther's return to Wittenberg in March, 1522, helped to save the Reformation by restoring an element of sanity and moderation: moreover, the reformer now devoted himself to the practical problems that had to be faced by the new



Lutheran communities. He substituted the weekly for the daily Mass, popular election of ministers for episcopal ordination, financial autonomy and independence for the old international control. German hymns were introduced into the services, for which purpose Luther contributed many of his own composing: these are among the best products of the German Reformation, because hymnology and church music have been the vehicles of expression for all that is best in Lutheranism.

The iconoclastic phase in Lutheran development led, however, to the alienation of the humanists. As early as 1516 Luther had objected that Erasmus subordinated St. Augustine to St. Jerome, in the interpretation of the Scriptures as much as he, Luther, subordinated St. Jerome to St. Augustine. The support of the humanists was definitely lost by the violence of Luther's language, by the strong scholastic element in his thought, and by his insistence on a dogmatic formula as the sole key to salvation. Moreover, Luther's marriage in 1525 to the ex-nun Catherine von Bora seemed to many a sinister omen, especially as the reformer was always loud in his denunciation of immorality in the cloister. This, together with the death of the elector Frederick of Saxony (May 5, 1525) and the signing of the treaty of Madrid by Charles and Francis in the same year, might have led to the complete discredit and defeat of the movement, for Luther's patron was now dead, and the two Catholic monarchs of western Europe were, for once, banded together against heretics. But an event happened which emphasised, as nothing else could have done, the religious cleavage of Germany, and transformed Lutheranism from a personal and independent force into a political and territorial system. This was the Peasants' War of 1524-1525.

This great social revolt began as a sporadic movement, first in the territory round the Lake of Constance, then in Lower Swabia, next in Styria and the

Tyrol: soon Franconia and Thuringia were aflame, until in 1525 only Bavaria, Hesse, and the north-eastern territories were unaffected. The movement included artisans as well as peasants, and was directed primarily against the landlords, both lay and ecclesiastical: the various demands put forward included the abolition of irritating feudal incidents still surviving in the relations between lord and village community, and the restoration of common lands that had been enclosed. The right to fish and kill game was asserted: access to woods was to be free: arbitrary services should be paid for in wages. A document prepared at Memmingen in March, 1525, and known as the Twelve Articles, was accepted throughout Germany as the standard of revolt: included among its demands were the stipulations that the pastor should be elected by his community, that the only tithe leviable should be that on corn, and that the death dues paid by the peasants should be abolished. It has been suggested, as an explanation of these demands, that Germany in the early sixteenth century was passing through a phase similar to that through which England had passed in the later half of the fourteenth century. In both cases there was the same objection to the surviving and burdensome remnants of a decadent feudalism: in both, the same latent elements of crude communism based on a popular interpretation of certain Scriptural injunctions; in both movements also there was the indirect influence, never clearly defined, of a great reformer in the background—in England, Wycliffe; in Germany, Luther. There was, however, one element in the later revolt absent from the earlier. Germany was influenced by the process, begun by the fifteenth-century Renaissance called the "Reception" of Roman Law, whereby the clear-cut maxims of the new jurisprudence either displaced or were incorporated into the more elastic feudal custom, with the result that the heterogeneous rules by which the older system somehow worked were destroyed by the

more ruthless and logical principles which Romanised lawyers were applying in the manorial courts of Germany. The Roman Law of property knew nothing of villagers' immemorial rights in common fields—these fields were now being enclosed by landlords. The result was widespread misery and unrest. At first the rebels seemed likely to succeed, but geographical conditions prevented unity of action, and by 1526 the movement was everywhere being stamped out. The peasants had been ruthless in the hour of success: in their defeat they were crushed with merciless severity, and their survivors had to submit to a serfdom more galling than that from which they had attempted to escape. Their defeat was embittered by the fact that Luther denounced the peasants with the full fury of his invective, urging the landlords to destroy the insurgents with fire and sword.

The immediate result of the Peasants' War were that religious differences were made irreconcilable and the territorial princes now stood out as the arbiters of the destiny of Germany. Two leagues faced each other—that headed by George, duke of Saxony, which included the electors of Mainz and Brandenburg; and that headed by John, elector of Saxony, a Lutheran like his brother, with Philip of Hesse and the dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg and Mecklenburg. In his clear realisation of the possibilities of the situation, Philip of Hesse was the ablest of these men: it was he who inspired the Protestant league and saved Lutheranism by making it, not the emblem of revolt, but the badge of princely protection and authority; for Lutheranism, which had lost infinite prestige by the Peasants' War, was now to enter upon a new lease of life under the wing of the state. An important step in this direction was achieved when, at the Diet of Speyer in 1526, the Lutheran princes obtained, as a temporary concession, the right of regulating religious affairs within their own territories until the whole question of reform could be settled by a General Council to be held in a

German town. The result was that the right of deciding between the two religions was entrusted to the princes; in effect, this led eventually to the acceptance of Lutheranism as a public faith throughout the greater part of northern and central Germany. Ducal Saxony, under the rule of duke George (1500-1539), remained Catholic, but the latter was succeeded by a Lutheran, duke Henry. Philip of Hesse, duke Ulrich of Württemberg, the margrave George of Brandenburg-Anspach, dukes Barnim and Philip of Pomerania, duke Ernest of Brunswick-Lüneburg, and king Frederick I. of Denmark were all among the earlier converts to the new faith. Of the German cities, Brunswick, Hamburg, and Lubeck were the most important conquests for Lutheranism. In 1525 the margrave Albert of Brandenburg, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, secularised the lands of the Order in East Prussia and received them as a Lutheran state under the suzerainty of Poland: it was not, however, until 1535 that electoral Brandenburg became Lutheran on the death of the Catholic Joachim. Bavaria remained the one strong bulwark of Catholicism in Germany. Outside Germany, the new faith won its most complete conquests in Scandinavia. By 1527 Frederick had legalised Lutheranism in Denmark in face of a powerful and wealthy clergy: in Sweden the revolution which placed Gustavus Vasa on the throne (1523) was followed by the preaching of Lutheran doctrines and the creation of a homogeneous Lutheran state.

These territorial settlements entailed, in practice, the marriage of priests, the giving of the cup to the laity, the use of the vernacular as well as Latin in the services and the recognition of the Bible as the sole guide in matters of faith: they also entailed the confiscation or secularisation of ecclesiastical property under "administrators." It was soon evident that this was a very significant consequence of the territorial concession made in 1526: the substitution of hereditary Lutheran lands for elective Catholic estates would

speedily revolutionise Germany. At the meeting of the Diet, held also at Speyer in 1529, the emperor was able to secure the cancellation of this concession of 1526, and the Diet also ordered the restoration of confiscated ecclesiastical possessions. From the Protest (April, 1529) against this decision is derived the word Protestant: the Protestors, who included the electors of Saxony, the margrave George of Brandenburg, the dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, and Philip of Hesse, maintained that what had been decreed at one Diet could not be rescinded by another. This vindication of the right of separatism and territorialism was followed by a definition of faith. The occasion of this was provided at the Diet of Augsburg, which met in June, 1530, when Charles, once again conciliatory, attempted to win over the secular leaders of the German Reformation and obtain a subsidy for his campaigns against the Turk. A very full statement of religious principle was drawn up by the German humanist, Philip Melancthon, the most learned and moderate of Luther's interpreters and, at this time, his coadjutor and representative; after the signature of the Lutheran princes had been affixed, this document was presented to the emperor. In the Augsburg Confession is to be found one of the first concerted formularies of dissent and one of the first of a series of immutable "Confessions" by which the later history of Protestantism was profoundly influenced. It asserted, for the Lutheran Church, kinship with the principles of primitive Christianity: the theology of St. Augustine was accepted as binding on all believers: the doctrine of justification by faith was given logical exposition and its consequences clearly deduced. In matters of discipline, the document condemns clerical celibacy, oral confession, and the exercise of secular power by bishops. It is possible, however, to over-estimate the revolutionary element in the Augsburg Confession. It is true that the medieval conception of the Mass is repudiated, in the sense that the later medieval theologians had

understood it—namely, as a process of repetition whereby the priest, in virtue of his spiritual powers transforms the elements into the actual blood and body of Christ; but, on the other hand, the Lutheran doctrine does not deny the existence of the body and blood in the bread and wine, insisting only that no miracle is performed by the priest, and that the presence is there because of its ubiquity, a conception fundamentally opposed to the Zwinglian view that the sacrament is merely commemorative or symbolic.

The Confession was intended to be conciliatory, and was framed in such a way as to open the door to reunion with the Church: Melancthon, indeed, was devoted to the conception of unity of faith, and would have been willing to make concessions in regard to episcopal supremacy and papal jurisdiction. But Luther was still an active force, and he threw his weight into the scale against further proposals for conciliation. Lutheranism had attempted to purge itself of the accusation of heresy: it had expressly repudiated the more extreme Zwinglianism, and had relegated to the background the gloomy doctrine of predestination, which was never thenceforth to play any important part in German theology, but these concessions had merely served to harden Catholic theologians against any dallying with innovations. It was clear that the Lutheran princes would have to fight for their faith and also for the rich lands which they had acquired by secularisation.

The long and complicated story of the intrigues, rebellions, and wars between 1530 and 1555 belongs as much to the history of Germany and Europe as to that of the Reformation, for by 1530 Lutheranism was crystallising into the evangelical conservatism which we know to-day, and all that remained was to give it permanent sanction. The twenty-five years of struggle by which that was achieved are the years which saw the formation of the Schmalkaldic League of Protestant princes, the alliance with France against the Haps-

burgs, the rise and suppression of the saturnalian communism of the Anabaptists of Münster in Westphalia, the scandal of the bigamy of Philip of Hesse and its condonation by Luther, the defeat of Saxon troops by Spanish infantry at the battle of Mühlberg, and the rise of Maurice of Saxony, probably the ablest if the most unscrupulous of the princely leaders of the Reformation. It was Maurice who first clearly realised the full secular potentialities of German Protestantism. Devoid of religious convictions, he first sold himself to Charles V., his price being the electoral dignity, then in possession of his cousin, of the Ernestine branch. Having deceived his compatriots, he then deceived the emperor: allying with France, he negotiated with the Protestants and led an army across Germany to assert the cause of German "liberty" against the Hapsburgs. The flight of Charles across the Brenner (May, 1552) ended the first and most turbulent generation of Lutheran history: the victor of Mühlberg had to confess defeat, and his abdication a few years later was evidence of the failures of his declining years. He had hoped to profit by the forces of German disunion; he was defeated by German duplicity and intrigue. Already in 1552 the Peace of Passau granted freedom of conscience to the Lutherans, and, in disgust, Charles left to his brother Ferdinand the task of establishing a permanent religious settlement in Germany.

This was formulated in the Peace of Augsburg, September 25, 1555. Lutheranism was recognised as a public religion in Germany, and the Lutheran princes were given the right to expel dissentients and to retain all ecclesiastical property that had been secularised before 1552. Each ruler might choose between Catholicism and Lutheranism and enforce on his subjects the religion of his choice, a principle embodied in the formula *cujus regio, ejus religio*. Spiritual princes who became Protestant were to forfeit their lands and dignities—a provision, generally referred to as the ecclesiastical reservation, never fully accepted by the

Lutherans. The Peace of Augsburg made no provision for Calvinism: nor did it lay down any rule for the contingency that a majority in a Cathedral chapter, having become converted to Lutheranism, might elect a Lutheran bishop or administrator. The Catholics refused to surrender their right of persecuting Lutheran minorities in their states, and the Lutherans made mental reservation when they accepted the clause providing that a bishop who went over to Lutheranism should forfeit his lands and dignities.

It is clear that by its limitation, its omissions, and its ambiguities the religious Peace of Augsburg was merely a truce. Practical difficulties in its application proved to be one of the main causes of the Thirty Years' War. Its immediate result was the aggrandisement of the Lutheran princes in Germany who, by various means, induced chapters to elect younger sons as bishops or "administrators," a process which transformed elective Catholic lands into hereditary Protestant lands, and led directly to hostilities. Nor can the Peace of Augsburg be hailed as a landmark in the history of toleration. It definitely recognised, as no medieval formulary had ever done, the right to expel or persecute minorities and based that right on the possession of land and sovereignty. Thus a German ruler might alternate annually between Lutheranism and Catholicism, and each year require his subjects to conform to his annual faith. The Peace of Augsburg ushered in one of the most intolerant periods in the history of human civilisation.

Luther had died in 1546, nearly a generation after his great achievements at Wittenberg, Worms, and Speyer, and both his contemporary and posthumous reputation have to some extent suffered by this generation of partial eclipse. There are few subjects more controversial than that of the character and work of Martin Luther. His earliest biographer (Cochläus) regarded him as a child of Satan, and, until the end of the eighteenth century, it was believed by many pious



Catholics that the Devil himself appeared at Martin's death-bed to claim him for his own. Nineteenth-century controversialists substituted for the Satanic theory of Luther's personality the view that he was unbalanced and liable to hallucinations: according to Döllinger and Janssen, he was also immoral: in the interpretation of Denifle he appears as the degenerate product of a decadent scholasticism. It has remained for the Jesuits, represented by Grisar, to advance the theory that his was really a nerve case: he was mentally ill, and his illness produced the aberration and distortion of the monomaniac. To Nietzsche, who had little theological bias, Luther was merely a "barbarian" and a "demagogue."

On the other side, opinion has been almost equally pronounced. Schiller hailed Luther as a pioneer of intellectual freedom: Ritschl claimed him as a prophet, and the radical Protestants of the Tübingen school have consistently accepted him as a genius and national hero. The publication of the great Weimar edition of Luther's works, commenced in 1883, has helped to provide the material for a more accurate estimate. Harnack has laid emphasis on the elements of conservatism, and even orthodoxy in the reformer's teaching, and has treated the incidents of 1519-1521 as an episode in what was otherwise a non-revolutionary career. The general tendency of historical scholarship has been to show the debt of Luther to predecessors, and how little of either the original or the revolutionary there was in his thought. In consequence of this changed attitude, and with the help of the greater amount of material now available, modern critics have dethroned Luther from the pinnacle on which "his worshippers placed him, and have traced the origins of Protestantism to sources other than Wittenberg, notably to Erasmus, to Sebastian Franck, and to Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt. From both the Protestant and Catholic point of view, therefore, there has been a shrinkage in Luther's posthumous personality:

the devil has become a hypochondriac and the superman has been dwarfed into one of a crowd. As historians emancipate themselves from the Carlylean psychology, heroes and hero-worship will be more and more discounted, and a future generation may be able to prove that the Reformation was due solely to economic causes in which human personality had no part.

Thus there is a danger that, from the Protestant point of view, the character and work of Martin Luther may be under-estimated, while, from the point of view of Luther's opponents, it may be forgotten that his onslaught on obvious abuses led directly to important reforms in the Catholic Church itself. While it is true that modern Lutheranism tends to degenerate into a tepid and conventional evangelicism, and that (except in music) it has never proved an independent spiritual force of any magnitude, it should be remembered that Luther belongs to the history of Europe as well as to the history of a Church. The modern territorial conception of the state owes much to Luther's idealisation of the "godly prince" and, whether for good or ill, it is to Luther more than anyone else that we owe the change whereby nations cast off the intellectual and spiritual supremacy of Rome to evolve independent, exclusive, and always potentially hostile existences. Like Christ, Luther brought not peace, but a sword. A true estimate of European civilisation can ignore neither.

## CHAPTER III

*THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND  
AND FRANCE*

THE Reformation in Switzerland was effected by two reformers—Zwingli and Calvin. Huldreich Zwingli was born in 1584 in the Toggenburg valley, and his early years were passed in a community which possessed long traditions of religious and political independence. In 1504 he graduated at the university of Basle and devoted himself to humanist studies: like Erasmus, he came to regard ecclesiastical abuses and superstitions with the impatience and irritation natural to a man of scholarship and refinement. These studies led inevitably to the reading of the Scriptures and the Fathers, especially St. Augustine: like Erasmus, also, he at first took his stand on the conception of religious and intellectual freedom; nor did the first thirty years of his life suggest that he would ever become an ardent reformer. For a time he served as a papal mercenary and obtained a papal pension: it was his experience of ecclesiastical abuses combined with his humanist reading, while parish priest at Glarus, that first turned his attention to reform. An opportunity soon came. In 1518 he was appointed priest of the Great Minster at Zurich, a city which, having acquired practical independence of papal and clerical control, was accustomed to the public discussion of religious and political questions. There he successfully resisted a Franciscan who had come to the city in order to preach an Indulgence: this was followed by a victory on the question of the observance of Lent, when the city, influenced by the young preacher, over-ruled the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Constance. Unlike Luther, Zwingli did not have to create public opinion, but to direct it. At a public disputation in 1523 he formulated Sixty-Seven Theses, in which, taking as his

basis the Scriptures and the conception of the Church as a republic of believers, he denied the legitimacy of papal and hierarchical rule and repudiated the doctrines of purgatory, invocation of saints, clerical celibacy, fasts, pilgrimages, and transubstantiation. Zwingli's pen and a willing Press gave wide currency to these views. Their corollaries inevitably followed—a plea for a general dissolution of the monasteries in Switzerland and an attack on all church adornments and paintings. Zwingli's teaching was eagerly welcomed by a peasantry which had never taken kindly to the religious orders. But throughout this period of his career, the Swiss reformer acted in conjunction with the civic authorities: nowhere else was there such harmonious co-operation between reformer and magistrate.

The result of this co-operation was that a reformation was silently and quickly effected in Zurich. The Minster Chapter was completely reorganised: the clergy had to devote an hour each day to public Bible-reading, and the proceeds from disendowed monasteries were used for educational purposes. Zwingli resigned his pastorate in order to be more free for the administrative work demanded by these reforms, but he continued to exercise his influence through a small executive committee of the city council: dissentients were removed and Zurich was ruled by a junta. Outside Zurich, however, there was a sharp division in the Swiss attitude to these reforms, a division which threatened to destroy the Swiss confederation. In 1524 the cantons of Lucerne, Schwytz, Uri, Unterwalden and Zug formed a league for the defence of Catholicism: in these cantons the abuses of later medieval Catholicism were not so obvious: the proportion of monastic houses was smaller, and hence the need for reform was not so great. Against this Catholic league Zwingli could rely on the support of Berne, Basle, Mühlhausen, St. Gallen, and Schaffhausen: moreover, he could depend on Strasburg: he was in active alliance with duke Ulrich of Württemberg and Philip

of Hesse; indeed, his views were more widely accepted in south-western Germany than were those of Luther. It is noteworthy that Zwinglianism never allied with Lutheranism, though Zwingli negotiated with the Elector of Saxony, a fact due to this, that while Lutheranism was conservative and territorial, Zwinglianism was revolutionary (the bread and wine were regarded as mere symbols), and democratic, in the sense that it dared to dictate to the state. The Lutheran pastor had the makings of a good civil servant: the Zwinglian pastor was the coadjutor of the magistrate. This failure of the Swiss Protestant Union to unite with German Protestantism was due not to any defects in Zwingli's diplomacy, but to radical differences in the two reformations, differences which have dogged the footsteps of Protestantism at every stage in its progress.

By the time the Reformation was completed in Zurich (1527), Switzerland was a whirlpool of disunion and intrigue. While Zwingli wished to make religion a cantonal matter and angled for a French and Savoyard alliance, the Catholic cantons resented the attempts of Zurich to extend the Reformation into subject lands; they believed that the religious cleavage would break up the confederation, and in the Hapsburgs they found allies who welcomed the opportunity of regaining their former power in Swiss lands. Civil war was precipitated when the Zwinglians imposed a trade embargo on the five Catholic cantons in order to force them to admit reformed preachers: hostilities commenced, and Zwingli himself was killed at the battle of Kappel (October 11, 1531). The Peace of Kappel left the Zurich settlement intact, and recognised the *status quo* in the common lands, but each canton was left free to manage its own religious affairs. This settlement did not, therefore, differ in principle from that of the Peace of Augsburg, for it involved a tacit admission of the principle *cujus regio ejus religio* and so emphasised the baneful association of religious right with territorial might. The disasters following on

Zwingli's attempts to create a Swiss reformed Church having its headquarters in Berne and Zurich served for a time to discredit the Reformation in Switzerland, and this accounts for the rapid extension of the Counter Reformation in the years immediately after the crushing defeat of the Zwinglians at Kappel. Henceforward Geneva was to take over the leadership which Zurich had lost.

The second and greatest of the reformers of Switzerland was a Frenchman, John Calvin, who was born in 1509 at Noyon in Picardy, the son of a notary public. He studied the Classics at Paris and Law at Bourges and Orléans: from the first he acquired not that breadth of culture and sanity of judgment which the humanities are specially fitted to inspire, but a range of combative erudition which served to give him high place among the controversialists of his day; while from his juristic studies he acquired something of that precision and logic which impelled him to sweep indignantly aside the whole mass of tortuous compromise and incoherent aspiration which we call medievalism. In character he was courageous, inflexible and ruthless, surrendering himself to the domination of a doctrine from which every human instinct revolts, and imposing that doctrine on other men by the force of a cold but magnetic personality. What Lenin was to the monarchist régime in Russia, such was Calvin to the empire of Catholicism in Western Europe: in both men there was the same absolute consistency of purpose and the same refusal to deviate by a hair's breadth from the path indicated by an imperious logic: in both there was the same indefinable and almost hypnotic power by which their followers were alternately fascinated and perturbed.

In 1532 Calvin published his first book—a critical edition of the *De Clementia* of Seneca, a work which shows the early influence of the Stoic ideal of virtue for its own sake. This conception colours the whole of Calvinist theology, and is the antithesis of the medieval

insistence on a very definite scheme of rewards and penalties in this and a future life. Shortly after producing this work he experienced a sudden conversion: he remained still a humanist, but like Luther and St. Augustine, he was led to make certain theological deductions from his psychological experience. From Luther also, and more especially from St. Augustine, he derived a doctrine of Grace which he pushed to a remorseless conclusion. St. Augustine, living at a time when the world was limited in extent and supposed to be equally limited in duration, had developed and refined the Pauline doctrines of Grace into the theory that Grace is free in the sense that it cannot be acquired by human effort: that it is effective, in so far as no man on whom it descends can resist it nor ever completely relapse from it, and that it is exclusive, because reserved solely for the Elect who are preordained to be of that body and whose number is equal to that of the fallen angels. This theory, it should be noted, was formulated mainly in answer to the free-will theology of the heretical Pelagians, and may not have been an altogether unreasonable doctrine at a time when Christianity had not yet won Europe from paganism. That the doctrine had not been taught by Christ was no deterrent to Calvin, nor has that objection ever weighed heavily against it in Christian theology, because Catholicism and Protestantism are united in their reverence for the philosophy which St. Paul and St. Augustine elaborated from their interpretation of Christian ethics. The obvious deduction from this teaching is Predestination: Calvin was probably the first to enunciate it in unequivocal terms, for what was latent in Paul, St. Augustine and Luther was emphasised by Calvin with a full knowledge of its implications. "Men," he declared in his *Christianæ Religionis Institutio*, "are not all born equal, for some are preordained to eternal life, some to eternal damnation." In this he may have shown courage, but it is not so certain that he showed insight: some would

argue that it merely proves Calvin to have reverted to a fourth-century type, and that thus he was not only perverse, but hopelessly out-of-date: others would suggest that Calvin herein anticipated a very modern point of view which, by analysing and accounting for all the influences determining conduct and character, leaves no room whatever for what is commonly called freewill. Others again would argue that inequality is the most permanent and radical characteristic in human history: there are many races which have never heard the Gospel: of the Christian races, the majority succumb to sin and indifference, leaving only a small minority of the Elect. Surely the doctrine of Predestination is at least an adequate theological explanation of admitted inequalities in God's dealings with humanity? A theological age cannot lightly dismiss the doctrine of predestination: Calvin left no alternative.

As France was every year becoming more unsafe for heretics, Calvin, in 1534, went to Basle, where he published the first edition of his *Christianæ Religionis Institutio*, which he dedicated to Francis I. In this book—modified and considerably extended in later editions—he appealed to the Gospels as the one binding code outside of which there is no authority. Within scriptural limits, he pleaded for liberty of religious thought and (in his dedicatory epistle) he argued that unjust and tyrannical kingship is really no kingship at all. In successive editions he elaborated an ecclesiastical polity wherein a whole hierarchy was built up on the unit of the individual church governed by its elective body of lay elders and deacons, each choosing and regulating its own pastor and freely criticising each other's morals and theology. The whole book reveals the mind of a humanist whose studies have directed his religious ardour into deep and clearly defined channels: probably no other book has been so directly the inspiration of a church as this, for it was based on the Bible and claimed to reduce scriptural



injunctions to the spiritual and administrative needs of all time. At no period did Calvin ever regard himself as heretic or innovator : to him, the true Church was the embodiment not of experiment or progress, but of the eternal and immutable. It followed that the state should enforce the decrees of this divinely ordained Church. Such an autocratic ecclesiastical edifice could not at once be imposed on a nation, but it might be enforced on an independent city.

It was in Geneva that Calvin's great work was to be accomplished. Geneva, then under the loosely defined headship of the Duke of Savoy, was the ideal strategic centre for an intellectual and spiritual campaign : the point on which Gallic, Teutonic, and Latin civilisation focussed, and from which radiated a network of intellectual highways reaching into every country of western Europe. The city was cosmopolitan, turbulent, and immoral : power was disputed by the bishop, the civil governor and the populace, the last being represented by a general council, for membership of which all the heads of families were eligible. It was the fervid political consciousness of this small and compact city state that later provided the inspiration for the political thought of Rousseau : in the sixteenth century it was the medium through which Calvin effected a spiritual revolution.

Except for a period of three years (1538-1541), when he was in Strassburg, Calvin lived in Geneva from 1536 until his death in 1564. At first, he attempted, with the help of Farel and the support of the Council, to effect a moral reformation on the basis of the existence of stringent laws against immorality in the old statutes of the city, but the populace was not yet prepared to see these enforced, and the reformer became unpopular. He was accused of heresy and banished : three years later he was recalled. The young preacher and professor interpreted his recall as a mandate for the erection in Geneva of a church in accordance with his own ideal, an ideal wherein the

church was not a merely passive or individualist institution, but an independent and even militant organisation which must work hand in hand with the state and might require the magistrate to carry out its decrees. As Zwingli had been the autocrat of Zurich, so Calvin became the autocrat of Geneva, with the difference, however, that Calvin's régime was to be more lasting and more fruitful, for while Zwingli had frittered away his energies and alienated his countrymen by his attempts at diplomacy, Calvin, from the first, appeared in the guise of a law-giver and a statesman, having a divine mission to perform. As a legislator, Calvin was second only to Moses. In his Ecclesiastical Ordinances he drew up a complete code for the spiritual welfare of the city. His pastors were organised into a corporation: individual criticism of each other was tolerated and even encouraged: a synod heard complaints regarding ministerial conduct, and imposed penalties with the rigour of a medieval "chapter of faults": a discipline almost military in character held together the men, by whose help Calvin imposed an iron domination on Geneva. For the layman the code was scarcely less severe. The young were drilled in the austerities of Latin and Greek grammar and of Calvin's Catechism, a curriculum which at least encouraged a strong sense of conviction and purpose in human life, and helped to discount those intellectual and spiritual misgivings that may be prompted by a more liberal education. Morals were controlled by a supreme council, or consistory, of eighteen lay and clerical members armed with absolute power over the private lives of the citizens. Sitting regularly as a court, this tribunal handed convicted persons over to the magistracy; from its sentences there was no appeal. Church attendance was enforced; personal demeanour at the services was controlled by penalty: adultery, blasphemy, and heresy were punished by death. Of the victims of this ecclesiastical tyranny the Spaniard Michael Servetus was the most notable.

His expressed scepticism regarding the existence of the Trinity was known to Calvin, who took advantage of Servetus' passage through Geneva to have him tried for heresy. He was condemned and burnt at the stake: one of the three surviving copies of his book was the charred volume snatched from the flames. This act of Calvin's is usually condoned on the ground that the age was an intolerant one.

While it is usual to designate Lutheran churches as "evangelical" or "of the confession of Augsburg," the churches which trace their inspiration to the Swiss reformers are always called the "Reformed" churches. The distinction is not without importance, for there could scarce be a greater contrast than that between Luther and Calvin, nor an antipathy greater than that which developed between Lutheran and Calvinist. The contrast is not merely one of doctrine and of relation to the state, but also of race and temperament. Luther was a rebel, but still a scholastic: there was little of the constructive in his thought: his appeal was primarily to a nation which is more introspective than logical. Moreover, the fact that Lutheranism was taken over bodily by the state led to the extinction of whatever creative impulses it had originally possessed. It was otherwise with Calvin and Calvinism. The French reformer was a keen and penetrating scholar fully endowed with the realism of his race. His breach with the mediæval past was complete; his outlook was not parochial but universal, and the foundations of his system were more solid, for they reached right down to St. Augustine and an interpretation of the Scriptures. His church was "reformed" in the sense that the best sixteenth-century minds attributed to reformation—namely, not as building up *de novo*, but as reverting in the spirit and the letter to the original fountain-head. While Lutherans sometimes fought under the same flag as Catholics and attempted, at times, to effect a reconciliation, such reconciliation was never possible between Calvinist and Catholic, for

while the Catholic attitude is the result of cumulative and collective tradition, the Calvinist interpretation of Christianity is the work of one personality, and bears upon it something of the uncompromising rigidity of its creator. Moreover, at least in France and in Scotland, Calvinism had to fight for existence against established authority: its principles forbade it to shelter behind the prince, and in consequence it became a militant and a conquering creed, the inspiration of pioneers, soldiers, and missionaries: a creed which, in spite of its gloomy doctrine of predestination, has been associated with the most progressive and enterprising peoples of modern times.

Though French Protestantism came eventually from Geneva, the Reformation began in France as a humanist movement. It was inaugurated in the early years of the sixteenth century by a small group which included the scholar Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Guillaume Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, and Margaret, duchess of Alençon, sister of Francis I. of France: these were the foremost in a coterie known as "the group of Meaux." The first began as a scholar and ended as a theologian. After secular studies in Paris and Italy he translated and edited in 1512 the epistles of St. Paul, and in 1523 he translated the four Gospels into French. In his commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Lefèvre propounded a doctrine of human works, which foreshadows Luther's doctrine of Justification by Faith. The second of the group, Bishop Briçonnet, was more interested in practical questions of reform. He was the pupil of Lefèvre, whom he invited with other scholars to stay with him at Meaux in 1520: these scholars included William Farel, who was afterwards to be the coadjutor of Calvin. Margaret of Alençon was the informal patron of this group: she corresponded regularly with Briçonnet, who was her confessor, and her rank helped to confer on the group something of the atmosphere of a salon. These

humanist reformers sought for guidance in the Scriptures, and, like Luther, Lefèvre d'Etaples questioned the whole medieval system of "works," but the movement was quite independent of Wittenberg. Briçonnet held that reform should start with the diocese and should emanate from the bishop: religious houses within the diocese should be visited and controlled: the mendicant Orders should be checked, and abuses remedied without recourse to Rome. In this principle of diocesan autonomy and reform Briçonnet was anticipating some of the seventeenth-century Jansenists who proposed to revive and purify religious life by substituting episcopal for papal direction. Thus the aims of the Meaux reformers were moderate and practicable, but these are not the qualities which ensure success in great religious movements. As in Italy, the early reformation in France was too cultured and dilettante, too local, and even feminine to produce a national response.

Nevertheless, there was alarm in France lest the Lutheran books then circulating all over France might disturb the religious unity of the state. In June, 1523, the books of Louis Berquin, one of the few real Lutherans in France, were censured, and two years later John Leclerc, a wool-carder, was executed for sacrilege. The *Parlement* of Paris ordered that all Lutheran books should be delivered up. Briçonnet was himself embarrassed by the more extreme views of the sacrament propounded by Farel, and the beginnings of persecution caused some of "the group of Meaux" to fly for refuge to Strassburg. Once heresy-hunting commenced it was not difficult to find victims: Berquin was burnt at the stake, and persecution for a time vacillated because Francis ordered repressive measures only when in need of money from the clerical estate. In 1532 his alliance with Henry VIII. and the Protestant princes of Germany, and in 1533 his temporary alliance with the papacy, served further to perpetuate these alternations of clemency and

austerity in his dealings with French Protestants. Like Charles V., Francis accepted what were then regarded as the fundamentals of the Catholic faith: he had shown personal sympathy with some of the more moderate reformers such as Lefèvre: he considered the papacy as a temporal principedom to be alternately threatened or cajoled, but he had an innate horror of acts of sacrilege and vandalism. These acts reached a culmination in 1534, with the result that more than a score of heretics were burnt within a few months. But in 1535 the policy of conciliation was renewed, for the French king, having allied with the Turk, was anxious to cement a union with the secular leaders of German Protestantism against the Hapsburgs. By the intervention of Melancthon and Bucer an attempt was made to procure a conference between French and German theologians. With the failure of this project and the increasing alienation between the moderate and extreme reformers ends the first stage in the French Reformation.

Thus far, reform had ranged between the extremes of cultured evangelicism and fanatical vandalism, while in the background was Lutheranism, capable both of infecting France with heresy and of providing useful diplomatic allies. Alliance with the Protestant abroad and suppression of the Protestant at home seemed the obvious solution of this dilemma. The second and greater epoch in the history of French Protestantism begins with the publication in 1536 of Calvin's *Christianæ Religionis Institutio*. This book gave cohesion and purpose to what had hitherto been sporadic and tentative, for it united into one clearly defined stream the parallel currents of humanism and dissent. As yet there was no organised Calvinist church in France, but the ground was being prepared, and in the south, with its Albigensian traditions and its experience of an Avignonese papacy, there existed all the materials for religious ferment. The movement was soon to be strengthened by a massacre. The

villages of Merindol and Cabrières, with several villages of the Provençal Alps, were inhabited by a peaceable community of peasants who had imbibed the doctrines of Peter Waldo and had sought guidance from the reformers of Germany and Switzerland. This brought upon them the wrath of the *Parlement* of Provence: in 1540 the Waldenses were declared heretics, and five years later a systematic massacre took place, in which about three thousand persons were destroyed. Responsibility for this rests primarily with the president of the *Parlement* of Provence, who had enrolled troops for the purpose of massacre, and had deliberately misrepresented the situation to the government in Paris. The massacre of the Waldenses was followed by the persecution of the reformers who had set up a church at Meaux. Fourteen members of the new church perished at the stake.

As persecution became more intense, the number of Protestants increased. The violation of public opinion implied by this policy of repression resulted in bringing over to the new doctrines many members of the lesser nobility and bourgeoisie who, while they could not openly avow their faith, were a far more serious menace than the few scattered heretics with whom Francis earlier in his reign had dallied. The accession of Henry II. (1547) inaugurated a consistent effort to uproot reform. A special tribunal of the *Parlement* of Paris was erected for the trial of heretics (the *Chambre Ardente*): the edict of Chateaubriand (1551) denied to the Protestants all right of appeal from the civil courts and gave rewards to informers: in addition, the edict ordered the closing of schools to children whose parents could not prove their orthodoxy. It was in this atmosphere of violence and treachery that the French Protestant Church came into existence. Protestantism had now spread throughout the whole length of the valleys of the Loire, the Rhone, and the Garonne: Lyon, La Rochelle, Dijon, and Angoulême were among the towns where it had gained a firm foothold, and in

1555 a Protestant church was organised in Paris on the model of that which Calvin had already set up. This example was followed by many towns: pastors were sent into France from the headquarters at Geneva, and throughout the years 1555-1564 Calvin, from his Swiss stronghold, directed the movement whereby a vigorous Protestant church was brought into existence in France. In 1559 the first Protestant synod met in Paris, representing nearly fifty churches: this assembly formulated a Calvinist scheme of church government and doctrine. At the death of Henry II. (July 10, 1559) Protestantism may be regarded as established in France and a proportion of the inhabitants, regarded by some authorities as amounting to nearly a tenth part of the population, were organised into secret Protestant communities, governed by consistories of elders and deacons, electing their own ministers and conforming in doctrine with the principles of Geneva. It is evidence of the great adaptability of Calvinism that, although formulated for a small civic community, it should have met the needs of a scattered minority in a large territorial state.

The period between 1559 and 1598 is filled with the Wars of Religion, one of the most complicated and dreary periods in the history of France. These are years when France was dominated by the great Guise family, who left their native Lorraine to pursue their ambitions in France with the help of the revived Catholicism which the Counter Reformation had brought into being: intrigue, treason, and massacre are the constantly recurring incidents of the régime which this haughty family imposed on France. These are also the years of Coligni and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew: of the French Protestant alliance with England: of the activities of the fanatical Paris League: of the Huguenot pronouncements on the sanctity of contract on which all government is founded: of the appeal to reason and moderation voiced by the party of the Politiques. For a time it seemed that Protestantism must succumb before the forces arrayed against it.



But the tide turned with the defeat of Philip's Armada in 1588: in the following year the Guises were assassinated, and the Huguenots now found a capable leader in Henry of Navarre, who had become heir to the French throne. By force of arms and skilled leadership, Henry carved his way to a kingdom: by popular ridicule, such as that of the *Satire Ménipée*, Frenchmen vanquished the forces of obscurantism among their own compatriots. The year 1598 brought peace at home and abroad, for the Treaty of Vervins was signed with Spain, and the Edict of Nantes, by according complete liberty of worship to the Huguenots, created an almost independent Protestant confederation in France. As in Germany, Protestantism had acquired recognition only by alliance with secular forces, and some of its spiritual vigour was inevitably sacrificed when the cause was taken up by political opportunists. Richelieu destroyed the political independence of the Huguenots while leaving them their religious independence: it was Louis XIV. who revoked the Edict of Nantes and expelled the Protestants from France.

## CHAPTER IV

### *THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND*

OF all the national reformations, that in England is the most difficult to estimate with any degree of historical accuracy. This may be due to the fact that Englishmen have always disliked abstract ideas: unlike their Scottish and Continental neighbours, they have never, as a nation, been deeply interested in theology: moreover, their sense of continuity and tradition has always been so strong that revolution,

whether in politics or in religion, has generally taken the form of readjustment rather than upheaval. The process popularly known as "finding a formula" has always found more favour in foreign than in English politics: many representative English minds would rather be wrong with Burke than right with Rousseau. To this temperamental characteristic may be added a social one. England never developed fully the medieval conception of estates. While in France there was a rigid barrier between the three estates of the realm, in England the lesser nobility threw in their lot with the representatives of shire and borough, thereby constituting the nucleus of a great middle-class such as existed in no other country. There is, finally, a third characteristic to be mentioned. England possessed an ancient common law which, having received a small tincture of Roman Law in the thirteenth century, remained immune during the period of the Renaissance from the European epidemic of Roman Law "receptions." This fact could not but deepen the sense of continuity in English life at a time when other races were eagerly sweeping away every vestige of their immediate past and building up anew. Hence at the beginning of the sixteenth century there existed in England a church which, while still an integral part of European Catholicism, had acquired a certain amount of independence of Rome: class hatreds were not so deep-seated as on the Continent: there was coming into existence a prosperous and fairly well-educated middle class: there existed a pride in English institutions, notably parliamentary and common law institutions. Dislike of rigid definition rather than objection to innovation was the dominant characteristic of the society to which the Reformation made its appeal.

Thus while Continental reformers placed their trust in first principles and imposed general formulæ on their disciples, the English reformers did not show the same haste in committing themselves to abstractions. What was actually achieved is therefore more difficult

to elucidate. One school has argued that the breach with Rome led to a complete change of doctrine and a severance with the past whereby the English Church became Protestant in the full sense of the word: in this view, Anglicanism is as distinctively Protestant as Lutheranism or Calvinism. Another school denies this, maintaining that historically the Church in England had never been completely subordinated to Rome, and that the Reformation was really a Restoration of a condition of things whereby England maintained her native Catholicism: the sixteenth-century changes were, it is held, changes not in spirit and essentials, but in discipline alone. The first school emphasises the conceptions of progress and development: the second clings to tradition and continuity.

The bonds with Rome were broken not by the criticism of a reformer, but by the passions of a king. Henry VIII., who could not procure his divorce from Rome, secretly married Anne Boleyn in January, 1533, and, with the help of Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, obtained an archiepiscopal declaration of the nullity of his first and the validity of his second marriage. The result was papal excommunication, responded to by an act of parliament, passed by a subservient legislature, settling the succession in favour of Anne Boleyn's issue. Already an act had been passed making appeals to Rome treasonable, and ecclesiastics were compelled to accept the position that the pope was merely the Bishop of Rome. The political side of the Reformation was completed when, in 1534, parliament was induced to pass acts declaring the king to be supreme head on earth of the Church of England (the Act of Supremacy) and granting him the firstfruits and tenths hitherto paid to the pope. A layman—Thomas Cromwell—was appointed Vicar-General in Spiritual Matters, and the Act of Supremacy was enforced with bloodshed: Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More were the most notable victims.

Henry now realised how far he could go. In 1535

Cromwell's agents conducted a special visitation of the monasteries and presented a highly coloured report of their alleged discoveries, but the character of the agents employed is quite sufficient to discount their evidence. These reports were used as a pretext for inducing parliament in 1536 to pass an act disendowing the lesser monasteries. The episcopal bench was filled with supporters of the royal supremacy, but no great change in doctrine was as yet contemplated, and the Ten Articles, formulated in 1536 in the hope of winning the political support of the German Protestants, merely modified slightly and temporarily the older view of purgatory and the sacraments. There was still a danger of European coalition against Henry, for the injured Queen Catherine of Aragon was the aunt of the emperor Charles V.: a Catholic king of Scotland still threatened the Northern frontiers, and, moreover, the Pilgrimage of Grace (1536) revealed the existence of great social discontent, some of it directly due to the abolition of the monasteries. Pressure from within and without induced Henry to seek safety by affirming his own doctrinal orthodoxy and enforcing it on others: this was the work of the Act of the Six Articles (1539), by which death was imposed on all who denied transubstantiation, while the repudiation of clerical celibacy, auricular confession, and private masses were each declared felony. Dr. Barnes and other preachers of the New Learning were executed: the political marriage with Anne of Cleves was annulled, and Cromwell, on various charges, was beheaded on Tower Hill. The despoiling of the monasteries went on apace. Thus Henry managed to reconcile his conscience with his interest. When he died in 1547 he left a church which, in all external essentials but obedience to Rome, was Catholic.

But behind the legislation important changes had been taking place. The New Learning had taken root in England in the preceding reign: Colet, More, and Erasmus, each personifying distinct aspects of the

Renaissance, had weaned Englishmen from the old Scholasticism. An authorised English Bible was published in 1536, and the Canon Law was abolished. William Tyndall, a translator of the Bible and of Erasmus' *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, had published in 1528 his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, wherein he denounced the Roman hierarchy and proclaimed the supreme authority of the Scriptures in the church, and of the king in the state. An intellectual revolution was gradually substituting the Bible and the classics for the "tryflynge workes of the sophisters, sentencyoners, schole doctours, canonysts and summystes." Scant respect was shown to the old books. When Layton concluded his visitation of the University of Oxford in 1535, he wrote as follows to Cromwell: "We have set Dunce [Duns Scotus] in Bocardo, and have utterly banished him Oxford for ever, with all his blind glosses, and he is now made a common servant to every man, fast nailed up upon posts in all common houses of easement. *Id quod oculis meis vidi*. And the second time we came to New College, after we had declared your injunctions, we found all the great quadrant court full of the leaves of Dunce, the wind blowing them into every corner, and there we found one Mr. Greenfield, a gentleman of Buckinghamshire, gathering up part of the said book leaves (as he said) to make him sewells or blawnsherrs to keep the deer within the woods thereby to have the better cry with the hounds."

Thus the despotism of Henry VIII. accustomed Englishmen to the conception of a disciplinary kingship endowed with the power of legislating in doctrine and morals. From the first it was clear that change in England would be on insular and national lines: reformation was to be eclectic and domestic: the accretions of medievalism were rejected, but a sense of continuity was preserved. Henry, in spite of his professed orthodoxy, had made several tentative advances towards reform, as when he instructed Cranmer to

draw up an ecclesiastical code for the English Church : at his death he left a council which included active sympathisers with reform.

The Protector Somerset began by rescinding most of the legislation of the previous reign. In this way the door was opened to foreign influences, and an outlet was found for the expression of that public opinion which had been so brutally violated by Henry VIII. Somerset showed an enlightenment and moderation not characteristic of sixteenth-century rulers. Many exiles came back, bringing with them the doctrines of Protestant Germany, of Zurich, Geneva, and Strassburg : foreign divines like Peter Martyr and Bucer came at the invitation of Cranmer to purge the Church of its abuses. Against the zeal of these enthusiasts the Protector had to issue proclamations, though personally he was the friend of reform. The English Reformation was still in the experimental stage. English was used in the services : the Sacrament in both kinds was administered : the clergy were allowed to marry : the psalms of Sternhold replaced the old canticles : many images and shrines were removed. Somerset's government preserved the *via media* between the zeal of dispossessed monks on the one hand, and reformed firebrands on the other. Uniformity was secured by the issue of the authorised Book of Common Prayer, the first version of which appeared in 1549, the result mainly of the labours of Cranmer, whose affinities with continental Protestantism were more with Lutheranism than with either Zwinglianism or Calvinism. The destruction of the records of Convocation in the Great Fire of London prevents any verdict on the question how far the Prayer Book was the product of debate. Its strong conservative element is due to the fact that it was based on the Sarum Use and on the reformed breviary of Cardinal Quignon : in doctrine it owes something to the *Simplex ac Pia Deliberatio*, attributed to Herman von Wied, but really compiled by Bucer and Melanch-

thon. The keynote of the book is struck in the opening words of its preface: "There was never anything by the wit of man so well devised or so surely established which, in continuance of time, hath not been corrupted: as (among other things) it may plainly appear by the common prayers in the Church. . . . But these many years past this godly and decent order of the ancient fathers hath been altered, broken, and neglected, by planting in uncertain stories, legends, responses, verses, vain repetitions, commemorations, and synodals, that commonly when any book of the Bible was begun: before three or four chapters were read out, all the rest were unread." Cranmer himself emphasised the fact that the book was an attempt to get back to the old and to eliminate corruptions that had stultified and obscured a pure original. "It seemeth to you a new service," said a royal message to objectors in the west, "and, indeed, it is none other but the old: the selfsame words in English which were in Latin, saving a few things taken out." Indeed, the success of the Prayer Book was due to its conservatism combined with its elasticity: it broke little fresh ground and left vexed questions of dogma veiled in the decent obscurity of Romanised English. It aroused most opposition among unlettered men who disliked a service in a language they could understand.

The substitution of Warwick for Somerset (1549-1550) ended this peaceful and moderate period of reform. Warwick was insincere: his Protestantism was both opportunist and uncompromising. Although for a time Cranmer struggled to retain his flexible and politic Lutheranism against the more extreme Zwinglian and Calvinist forces now arrayed against it, he had to yield to the party headed by Hooper which demanded that the First Prayer Book should be subjected to drastic reform. A second Act of Uniformity, passed in 1552, imposed a revised Prayer Book, from which many of the Catholic elements objected to in the first were removed, and an approach was made to

the interpretation of the Sacraments as merely symbolic rites. This book represents the utmost concessions ever made by the English Church to Zwinglianism. Cranmer had given way at every point: he refused, however, to delete the rubric which requires kneeling at communion. To the argument that the Scriptures do not enjoin kneeling, he replied that neither did they enjoin sitting, and so a victory was won for the party which insisted on a reverent posture in the performance of one of the most sacred of Christian rites. Other changes introduced by the Second Book of Common Prayer were the placing of the communion table in the body of the church: the omission of a thanksgiving to the Virgin Mary, and the introduction of the Ten Commandments. It should be added that later revisions of the Prayer Book (1604 and 1661-62) have removed Zwinglian elements and emphasised its Catholic character.

The death of Edward VI. (July 6, 1553) was followed by a Catholic reaction under Mary. Her Council proposed a complete abolition of the whole Reformation settlement, but parliament would go no further back than the beginning of Edward VI.'s reign. The Spanish marriage was followed by risings: many Protestants sought refuge on the Continent, and Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and Coverdale were deprived of their sees and imprisoned. In November, 1554, Cardinal Pole arrived in England as papal legate, and received a supplication from Lords and Commons that England might again be received again into the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church. This was followed by the annulment of all the anti-papal legislation of the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. and the revival of old acts against heresy. The persecutions began in 1555; about three hundred persons are known to have been executed in the remaining three years of the reign, including Hooper, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley. Cranmer was indicted on the grounds that as archbishop he had committed adultery by marrying:



that he had perjured himself by breaking his oath of obedience to the pope, and that by denying the doctrine of transubstantiation he was a heretic. He more than atoned for early vacillations and acts of sycophancy by his death at the stake. It was to him, more perhaps than to any other man, that the English Reformation was due, for he had long believed that while papal dominion lasted, the moral interests of the Church in England suffered: moreover, while he had imbibed Lutheran influences (mainly through Oslander) he strenuously upheld English and Catholic tradition against the more extreme reformers of Edward VI.'s reign. The essence of Cranmer's character was moderation, gentleness: he had a keen sense of decorum and decency in the religious life: he valued a graceful liturgy as an essential element in true worship: nor was his genius for compromise necessarily a sign of weakness. These personal qualities have impressed themselves on the Anglicanism of the past three centuries: in many quarters they are still keenly appreciated to-day.

In the reign of Mary's successor the English Church was restored and definitely re-established. From earliest youth Elizabeth had come into contact with Protestant influences, notably as the pupil of Bishop Hooper, but she was never a zealot, and the fluctuations of a womanly inconsequence left spectators guessing her real religion. There may be some truth in the statement that Elizabeth's birth forced her to be either a Protestant or a bastard: it should be added that her policy and prestige conferred on English Protestantism a stamp of nationalism and even patriotism.

From the first it was clear that parliament, not convocation, would be the source of ecclesiastical legislation. There was a Protestant majority in the Commons, and in 1559 were passed the two acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. The first substituted the title "supreme governor" for Henry's title "supreme head," a distinction with little difference, unless the

title "governor" was taken to imply some constitutional form of government, such as could be delegated to commissioners, while "headship" was probably assumed to connote a claim to sacerdotal and spiritual functions. Slight as was the terminological distinction, it helped to reconcile many to the institution of state supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, nor did it deprive Elizabeth of any of the powers exercised by her father. The Act of Uniformity enforced regular church-going and imposed the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. with some alterations which modified the Zwinglian elements existing in earlier rubrics. Archbishop Parker revised the Forty-Two Articles and drew up for Convocation the Thirty-Nine Articles. The original draft of the revised Articles had contained certain expressions derogatory to the Lutheran conception of the "ubiquity" of Christ's presence: these words were, on revision, omitted, as it was considered impolitic to give offence to the German Protestants. In view of these changes, it is significant that when the papal Bull of excommunication was formulated in 1570 the Queen was condemned not as a Lutheran, but as a Calvinist. Elizabeth's convictions on religious questions were known only to herself.

Such was the legislative settlement. The Marian bishops unanimously refused to accept the Act of Supremacy and were deprived, their successors being appointed by the deans and chapters on the nomination of the sovereign. Less difficulty was found in obtaining the adhesion of the lower clergy. Much of the credit of this peaceful settlement was due to the skill of two men; William Cecil, Secretary of State, and Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury; in the diplomatic astuteness of the one and the scholarly integrity of the other, Elizabeth found her surest supports during these critical years.

Concurrently with these events Scotland declared for the Reformation. The seeds of reform in Scotland had been sown in the years following the defeat and

death of James V. (December 14, 1542), only a week after the birth of his daughter Mary Queen of Scots. The old alliance with France was soon to be put to a breaking test. Scotland was under the nominal rule of a Frenchwoman (Mary of Lorraine, sister of the Guises), a Regent (James, Earl of Arran), and an ill-fated infant: it was inevitable that effective power fell into the hands of the powerful and still semi-feudal Scottish nobility who cast envious eyes on the rich lands of the church. Henry VIII. designed a marriage for his son Edward with the child Mary, a project rejected by the Scots, who were punished for their temerity by the burning of Edinburgh and the ravaging of the Lowlands. The Franco-Scottish alliance still seemed secure: in reality, it was completely undermined, for some of the nobility were in secret communication with Henry, from whom they were receiving bribes. Violence speedily supervened on treason. The Scottish reformer, George Wishart, was burnt for heresy on March 2, 1546: a few weeks later the archbishop George Beaton was assassinated in his castle of St. Andrews. John Knox entered St. Andrews like a second Calvin, but his citadel was besieged by the French, and his capture led to a period of nearly two years' service in the galleys.

Somerset continued Henry's policy of trying to win Scotland by force; his projected union of the two countries was ruined by the success of his troops at Pinkie (September, 1547). The young Mary was sent off to France, and the French alliance assumed a new strength as the policy not merely of Catholicism, but of patriotism. For a time it seemed that Scotland would be ruled from Paris, and that the one hope for Scottish nationalism lay in its complete subordination to France. Early in 1558, on the occasion of her marriage to the Dauphin, the young Mary Stuart signed a secret agreement whereby Scotland became a dependency of France, an act which gives a certain amount of justification for Scotland's subsequent re-

nunciation of her monarch. Meanwhile the spread of Calvinism in Scotland since the return of Knox in 1555 was to decide whether the future of Scotland would lie with England or with France. Knox's second enforced departure (July, 1556) did not lessen the waves of preaching and conversion which submerged the northern kingdom in a Calvinism as stern and dogmatic as that of Geneva. At the moment when civil war seemed inevitable, the initiative was taken by the leaders of the Scottish nobility, the Lords of the Congregation who, on December 3, 1557, entered into a Band or Confederation for the overthrow of Catholicism and the inauguration of national reform. Knox was summoned home again, and this time he stayed to complete his work. His preaching infuriated the mob to a destruction of sacred edifices so ruthless as to be incomparable with that of any other country influenced by the Reformation, and so complete that to-day the mainland of Scotland can boast only one intact pre-Reformation cathedral—that of Glasgow. Throughout the later part of 1559 Knox was in negotiation with Cecil and, with the help of English money, a revolution was effected. The Queen Mother and her French troops were besieged in Edinburgh Castle: there the Queen died (June, 1560), an event followed within a month by the Treaty of Edinburgh, whereby the French and English troops were withdrawn and Scotland left free to effect her reformation independently of both France and England. The papal jurisdiction and the Mass were abolished: Knox's Calvinist Confession of Faith was adopted, and the *First Book of Discipline* substituted for the old hierarchy a new one of pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons, a change well described in the language of the book itself: "It is neither the clipping of their crowns, the greasing of their fingers, nor the blowing of the dumb dogs called the bishops, neither the laying on of their hands that maketh true ministers of Christ Jesus . . . but the nomination of the people,

the examination of the learned and public admission." Throughout the Scottish Reformation the dominant conception was that of warfare—the extermination of the old faith as the Israelites exterminated the Amalekites. The ruins of Dunkeld and St. Andrews still bear eloquent witness to that spirit of destruction, but happily the "*perfervidum Scotorum ingenium*" has also found expression in spheres other than religion and vandalism.

To no other country did Calvinism bring such national invigoration as it did to Scotland. It was the Reformation that transformed the Scottish kingdom from a medieval into a modern state, for it broke not only the bonds of Rome, but the more degrading bonds of France, leaving Scotland to find her true interests in association with a partner of her own race and speech. On the Scottish character the Kirk has impressed something of its own austerity, independence and high seriousness, qualities which have fitted the northern kingdom to play a part out of all proportion to her population and material resources. The Union of 1707 was made possible by the fact that Scotland was able to maintain the supremacy of her presbyterian church, an institution far more representative of the nation than the old Scottish parliament which had been the mouthpiece only of an exclusive oligarchy.

The disappearance of the old Franco-Papal Scotland from the northern frontier helped to secure the permanence of the Elizabethan settlement in England. But the compromise on which the latter was founded contained two fundamentally antagonistic elements that were bound to assert themselves. The long-protracted Vestiarian controversy revealed the existence of a large party which disliked vestments and ritual, a party objecting to the rule of bishops as "*prelatic*" and looking to Geneva rather than to Canterbury for inspiration. Represented at first by Hooper and then by Elizabeth's ally, Knox, and her archbishop Grindal,

this party could claim, with some justification, that they were not dissidents, for, according to their contention, the English Church was one of the reformed churches, and, as such, was more Zwinglian or Calvinist than Catholic. That this contention was not wholly unreasonable can be shown in various ways. Thus the Ninth of the Lambeth Articles of 1595 officially endorses the Calvinist doctrine of preordained Grace: "It is not in the will and power of every man to be saved." In the same year as the promulgation of the Lambeth Articles, a young Cambridge theologian, when preaching for his B.D. degree, horrified his listeners by attacking the Calvinist doctrine of assurance in salvation and claiming that sin may destroy the effects of efficient Grace. This opened the door to the Pelagian theory of free will, and Barrett was required by the University authorities to retract. He publicly withdrew his statement that "no man in this transitory world is so strongly underpropped . . . that he ought to be assured of his own salvation" (*Recantation of Certain Errors raked out of the Dung-hill of Popery and Pelagianism*). The Calvinist strand in the intricate weaving of the Anglican settlement can still be detected in the clause of the Thirty-Nine Articles which requires acceptance of Predestination, so English churchmen of to-day are committed, in theory at least, to the gloomy doctrine of salvation associated with St. Augustine and John Calvin.

But nothing is more clear than that Anglicanism, developing on insular and national lines, has turned away from the continental elements which struggled hard for supremacy at the time of its inception. From the convenient foster-mothers of Calvinism and Zwinglianism, the Church of England has returned to and steadily developed the parental Catholic element, never at any time wholly repudiated, and always linked with the most deeply conservative instincts of the English race. This fact had become clear by the end of Elizabeth's reign, when English

churchmen had definitely dropped the typical Reformation conception of the Church as a hard-and-fast institution built up on definite scriptural rules and embodied in a cast-iron formula. The successive stages by which the English Church turned away from continental models can be seen in the controversy between Whitgift and Cartwright, and, later, in that between Hooker and Travers. The difference was primarily one of interpretation; the Puritans and Presbyterians regarding Scripture as superior to reason, while the Anglicans and their Arminian successors of the seventeenth century held that Scripture was directive, not coactive, and that historic tradition may be of more weight than individual argument. The weaknesses and failings of the Church of England have been mostly such as affect every ancient, state-aided church: sloth and sycophancy have been charged against many of its representatives, but rarely bigotry or obscurantism. More recent developments have served to bring into sharper prominence its Catholic and pre-Reformation elements, thus raising issues for the future the result of which can only be vaguely surmised.

## CHAPTER V

### *CONCLUSION*

It was said by Frederick the Great that but for the Reformation, the Catholic Church would have made the Virgin Mary a fourth person in the Godhead. This is true in the sense that the Reformation compelled the Romanist Church to put its house in order and obliged it to abandon some of the more materialist tendencies of later medievalism. Since the sixteenth century, fewer saints have been added to the Calendar

and miracles have been more strictly investigated. Paganism and Catholicism, which, in the fifteenth century, might have shared their supremacy, have ever since been kept apart by the solid wedge driven by Protestantism into the spiritual and intellectual life of Europe.

The Reformation, so far as it reacted on Catholicism, made it more easy for states to be Catholic but more difficult for individuals. Thus the decisions of the Council of Trent were carefully divided into two classes, canons and decrees, the first dealing with fundamental doctrines, the second with more debatable questions of discipline, and so it was possible for a state to accept the one while omitting the other. This actually happened: the French government never officially accepted the decrees: the only countries which at once accepted decrees and canons were Poland and Portugal. Venice was drawn into actual hostility to the papacy through its attitude to the decrees: Spain, under the Dominicans and its own Inquisition, was endowed with a considerable measure of independence. The development of the autonomous national states made the secular power of the papacy an anachronism, and with this there came also a change in the character of the popes. For the haughty and ambitious pontiffs of the middle ages was substituted a line of elderly Italians, mostly men of good morals and good administrative capacity, but generally of mediocre abilities and (with the exception of Urban VIII.) never of the heroic or spectacular type. It is this very mediocrity which may have preserved the institution, for it is the prerogative of real greatness to destroy as well as to create. The papacy has perhaps gained in prestige by what it has lost in power.

On the individual believer the Council of Trent imposed a rigid profession of faith which may well have been a challenge to Protestantism, for it included acceptance of the priestly miracle whereby the bread and wine are turned into the literal body and blood



of Christ: it included also belief in purgatory, veneration of saints and relics, the sole right of the Church to interpret the Scriptures, its power to bestow indulgences and the acceptance of ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition. Later developments have made the Catholic Church not less, but more militant in its attitude to the churches outside its frontiers, and more uncompromising in its requirements of the believers within its fold. The Vatican Decrees of 1870 and the attitude taken by the modern Catholic Church to modernist movements are alike evidences that while Catholicism is always enterprising, it is also eclectic, and refuses to assimilate anything that might disintegrate the supernatural monopoly on which it is based. Unity, exclusiveness, and concentration are the qualities which make Catholicism strong to-day: they have not always been its qualities, and they may have come into being in the narrower area under its control through the antagonisms which the Reformation introduced into Christianity.

The strongest force in this revived and restored Catholicism is that body which came into existence when the menace of Protestantism was at its height—the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits preached a doctrine of salvation which was at first disowned by the Catholic Church, but which has since been recognised as one of the most powerful weapons against Protestantism, for they attacked the Augustinian and Dominican doctrines of Grace, substituting a more liberal doctrine which allows for human participation in the process of salvation. They thus made salvation open to all men—a heresy repudiated by Augustinians, Dominicans, and Calvinists: they were the neo-Pelagians of the sixteenth century, winning over men by a freewill theology, and preaching a democratic Kingdom of Heaven in which the Elect were only an insignificant minority. Thus the institution of the Jesuits has helped to introduce a certain modernist note into Romanist theology, for, in contrast with the

Dominican and Calvinist theories of Grace, the Jesuits have restored to Christian doctrine an element of free-will. The Jesuits were modernists also in their attitude to persecutions for witchcraft and sorcery: nearly a century before Calvinist Scotland ceased to burn witches, a German Jesuit named von Spee had already written an eloquent plea for the suppression of the practice. It is true that in their reduction of casuistry to a scientific system the Jesuits often sacrificed morality to convenience, but it should not be forgotten that the association of modern Catholic dogma with free-will is in some measure due to the influence of a heresy popularised by Jesuits. This is a powerful weapon against the predestinarian tendencies of Protestant teaching.

Thus it is indisputable that Catholicism has been profoundly influenced by the Reformation. In contrast, the later history of the Protestant churches is one of division and disintegration, but not necessarily degeneration. Bossuet was right in his contention that Protestantism naturally tends to infinite variegation. The principle of individual interpretation of the Bible is sound in theory, but only in so far as each of the interpreters has the elementary education requisite for the interpretation of the written word. On the heterogeneous collection of books which make up our modern Bible, it is quite easy to foist any theory of material or spiritual welfare, and so long as there is complete freedom for the elucidation of a book generally considered to be verbally inspired, so long will there continue to appear the most fanciful and sometimes reactionary and dangerous theories regarding the will of God as expressed in humanity. *Timeo homines unius libri*: the Protestant has substituted a book for a pope: his rational powers for the collective opinions of doctors and councils: can it be wondered at that Protestantism, like dry wood, easily splits? But this is not necessarily an evil, for modern state regulations protect the child, to some extent, from the applica-

tion of dangerous theories based on the "interpretation" of the Bible, and it may not be certain that a universal, uniform, and absolutely homogeneous church is the best proof of spiritual vigour. So long as religion answers certain vital human needs, so long will it be almost as varied as human nature itself.

This faith in one book as a divinely ordained imperative has exercised a profound influence on the mentality and destiny of Protestant countries: it is inevitable that the assiduous and indiscriminate Bible reader should assimilate something of the temper so clearly delineated in the Mosaic and Jewish traditions of the Old Testament. He assimilates the conceptions of a ruthless deity and a chosen race: an aristocratic exclusiveness achieving its appointed destiny over inferior peoples: with these also he learns maxims of thrift, forethought, shrewdness, and industry—the qualities requisite for material success. Poverty and failure are anathema in the Old Testament psychology. Generations of Old Testament veneration may produce a vigorous, ambitious, and hard-working type of man, endowed with certain qualities of reserve and calculation, imbued with a quiet sense of superiority over others and convinced of a high purpose in human life. Such a type may be narrow, bigoted, and impenetrable, but always sincere and scrupulous. So far as religion can create a type, this is the type produced by Calvinism: it can still be found in America and in Scotland. Calvinism, alone of the Protestant sects, was fitted to be the inspiration of great men, and this because it was aristocratic, rigid, and Judaic, devoid of the indecision and benevolence that may hinder one in the race to material greatness. Nor are these the only practical results that may follow generations of devotion to the letter of the Old Testament. Moses included Public Health in the scope of his legislation, and it is indubitable that Protestant countries have made immense progress in sanitary science. This and religious toleration are probably the two most substantial advantages

possessed by twentieth-century as compared with sixteenth-century civilisation.

But while Sanitation is a distinctly Protestant contribution to European civilisation, religious toleration is not. It has frequently been asserted that the Reformation opened the spirit of free inquiry, and by so doing prepared the way for toleration. It is true that the appeal of Luther and Calvin to the Scriptures was a blow to the principle of priestly interpretation and teaching of the Bible, but it was an appeal to authority nevertheless. The mind of Europe was thrilled by the spectacle of a solitary monk defying pope and emperor: the success of such temerity might seem to augur well for the free criticism of doctrines and institutions. It is true also that certain Protestant sects, such as the English Independents, were tolerant, but the general truth remains that the Reformation was based not on the spirit of free inquiry, but on the appeal from one authority to another. The argument that the Reformation hastened toleration has to face two objections: first, that the century after the completion of the Reformation is a century of violent persecution by Protestant as well as Catholic; and, secondly, that although nominally Protestantism was based on individual access to and interpretation of the Scriptures, each Protestant church required strict adherence to very definite and very human formularies of faith. The substitution of St. Augustine for St. Thomas Aquinas is a very indirect pathway indeed to religious toleration.

The truth is that toleration was achieved partly because it paid and partly because the development of physical science, beginning in the seventeenth century, initiated thinking men to the conception of a universe infinitely wider than that known to men of the Renaissance and Reformation. The Dutch were the most tolerant nation in the seventeenth century: their prosperity was the envy of their rivals and enemies: cause and effect were slowly connected, and

it was at last realised that a prosperous community of heterogeneous heretics may, from the point of the ruler and tax-collector, be more advantageous than a community of paupers with nothing but a uniform orthodoxy to rejoice in. In Germany, after the 'Thirty Years' War, the great need was population, and the territorial princes speedily realised that it was bad policy to expel dissentients, a lesson applied with great success in Prussia, which benefited by the immigration of Huguenots expelled from France. Louis XIV. was the last king to insist on absolute religious uniformity: Frederick the Great was the first king to make toleration a definite political and economic principle. Concurrently with this change, there began a period of scientific inquiry, in which the dogmas of Aristotle were displaced by research and experiment. Scientific academies sprang up in England, France, and Italy: the Royal Society was founded in the reign of Charles II.: Galileo left a host of disciples behind him in Italy: in France, Fontenelle made Astronomy a fashionable subject of discussion. Later in the century, when the coming of a comet seemed to forebode upheaval or disaster to the rulers of Europe, Bayle startled the world by proclaiming that comets have nothing to do with the private affairs of humanity. The old cosmology was revolutionised not by the discovery of America, but by the discovery of the telescope. It was in this atmosphere of free scientific inquiry that the controversies of the sixteenth century were at last reduced to an entirely different perspective, and educated men, while clinging fast to their own faith, recognised the right of others to their own creeds.

Closely connected with the view that the Reformation led directly to toleration, is the view that Protestantism, or at least one form of it, led inevitably to modern democracy and republicanism. A successful challenge to a strongly entrenched hierarchy and the vindication of the right of private judgment must, it is argued, have helped to hasten the downfall of abso-

lutism as a principle of government. Some such assumption is at the basis of the attempt to link Rousseau with the reformers on the one hand and the French Revolution on the other. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*: on the Reformation have been fathered democracy, capitalism, revolution, and secularism, with all their attendant evils.

It is clear that Lutheranism cannot be considered responsible for democratic movements, because as soon as it sheltered under the wing of the state it became, from the political point of view, a department of the civil service, and this characteristic of absolute subordination to the state it has never lost. It is otherwise, however, with Calvinism. At no time was Calvinism submissive to the state: on the contrary, both in Geneva and in Scotland, it dictated to the state. Only in this narrow sense can it be called democratic. But in temper, both Calvin and his successors were aristocratic and autocratic rather than democratic: their Kingdom of Heaven was always a select and exclusive community, and they had a deep conviction of the necessity for the maintenance of the principle of authority in this world. Historically, Calvinists have been associated not with popular governments, nor with schemes of political emancipation, but with monarchies and burgher oligarchies: not with political change and experiment, but with political stability and conservatism. In this the Scottish Calvinists can be distinguished from the English Independents and Puritans: the Scots sold their king to the English, but they tried to prevent his execution, and they helped to restore his son. The French Huguenots invoked the contract in their plea for a limited monarchy, but that does not necessarily mean democracy as we understand it to-day, for the Huguenots (unlike the Jesuits) were careful to restrict the rights of private dissent, and, until their expulsion, they were among the most loyal and obedient of French subjects. Calvinists, while sometimes lacking in respect to the person of the

monarch, have always been firm believers in the institution of monarchy. It was the philosophers of the eighteenth century who weakened the absolutist fabric of European civilisation, and none of these was a Calvinist: on the other hand, in the seventeenth century, when the political influence of Calvinism was at its height, the continent of Europe was subjected to an absolutism more uniform and uncontested than that of any other period since the fall of the Roman Empire. Calvin, like Rousseau, awakened men's thoughts, but where the secular state was concerned, he might have claimed, as Rousseau claimed for himself, that "so far from destroying states, he had confirmed them." Both men were revolutionaries, but they were also fatalists.

The connection between Calvinism and modern democracy is probably more indirect and less obvious. A true democracy requires, for its institution and permanence, a large measure of popular education in the sense that Aristotle required his citizens to be educated—that is, they must be fitted for taking their part in the government and administration of the state. The "political education," as distinct from the "encyclopædic education" trains the citizen in a moderate number of subjects with the definite purpose of preparing him to co-operate with his fellow-men in public offices. Calvinism exercised something of this function in so far as its ecclesiastical system was based on the conception of the individual worshipper exercising his vote with a full consciousness of his responsibility; prepared, when required, to take his share of public duty, and ready to express criticism of the conduct or opinions of those entrusted with office. In this way Calvinism provided the basis of a political training unknown to either Catholicism or Lutheranism. But the democracy implied by this popular participation in government was a democracy only in the Aristotelian sense, not in the revolutionary, or popular, or socialistic

senses generally attributed to the word. Beneath Calvinist criticism of institutions there has always lain a deep respect for these institutions and a full admission of the necessity for the principle of authority in church and state.

Thus neither toleration nor republicanism can be regarded as direct products of the sixteenth-century Reformation, and it may be added that historical categories have to be abandoned altogether if every characteristic of modern Protestant states must be fathered definitely on the Reformation. Modern European civilisation is too complicated to be explained solely as the result of the ferment introduced by Luther and Calvin. Moreover, in the controversial literature of to-day, it is too often assumed that Protestantism and Catholicism are static quantities, still preserving the identical qualities which distinguished them in the sixteenth century. This is certainly untrue of Catholicism: it is even more untrue of Protestantism. In a sense, the original Lutheran and Calvinist theologies are impracticable—the first because it requires a degree of introspection unusual in the ordinary man, and the second because it expressly excludes a large portion of humanity from the scope of salvation. It is not difficult for a Catholic apologist to show that a full understanding of all the implications contained in the doctrine of justification by faith may require a certain aptitude for metaphysics, and, equally, the believer in predestination may, if he is among the Elect, be a spiritual snob; if not, he must either feel that he has no incentive to morality or become a morbid pessimist. The one form of Protestantism may create hydrochondriacs: the other, it has been argued, must produce a certain proportion of wild debauchees or hopeless lunatics. In contrast with these depressing possibilities, the Catholic apologist can point to a church which requires no complicated introspective processes other than those involved in the acceptance of cer-



tain clearly specified miracles: a church which teaches that Christ died for all men, and claims to be the repository of an age-long accumulation of spiritual power and efficacy by which the regular participant is constantly restored and reinvigorated. "Une religion est une société religieuse," wrote Bonald: the Catholic is never allowed to forget that he is part of an ancient and worldwide institution, while the Protestant may be left to struggle, as best he can, with arid and depressing doctrines of Grace and Justification. If he conquers in that struggle, then he will be tempted by spiritual pride: if he fails, he must succumb to the forces of disbelief.

Such is the case that can be made against Protestantism on the ground of its primary dogmas. But, in practice, religions seldom remain true to their original inspiration, and Protestantism is no exception to this rule. It may be asserted that at the present time very few Protestant churches insist on the characteristic religious doctrines on which they were founded: Lutheranism has long been mildly orthodox and evangelical: Calvinism has shown a zeal in foreign missions equalled only by that of the Jesuits, and, apart from a few cases of heresy-hunting, has developed, even in Scotland, into a liberal and somewhat variously defined code of Christian ethics. Religious catechisms are seldom used, and the word has now acquired an almost antiquarian flavour. Only by a minority in Protestant communities are the strict sixteenth-century formularies insisted on. Anglicanism has more vehemently than ever repudiated any connection with either Protestantism or the Reformation. Hope for union and reconciliation in the future would appear to lie in the development from Theology to Christianity—in the surrender of much of the unwieldy mass of commentary and dogma imposed on the original foundations by the first sixteen centuries of the history of Christianity. Very little distinction can be established between the

practical precepts and ethical principles on which the good Catholic and the good Protestant regulate their lives. There is much in common between the thinking Protestant and the thinking Catholic of to-day, but the forces of obscurantism and bigotry must always be reckoned with.

The distinctions between the new and the old faiths can, to some extent, be traced in art and literature, but here it is well to be wary of generalisation. It is true that the edifices and the ritual of Catholicism lend themselves better to artistic inspiration than the gaunt walls of a Calvinist church, but on the other hand Catholicism had the advantage of priority, and this counts for much in both art and literature. Moreover, it is seldom that the work of the creative genius can be definitely associated with any one set of religious beliefs, for true genius is universal, but if such a test were applied to modern times one might claim that while Puritanism was an inspiration in Milton, and Lutheranism in Bach, Catholicism, as such, has been the more direct inspiration of a large number of lesser men, notably Chateaubriand, De Maistre, Lamartine, and Cardinal Newman. But such a test is not quite fair. A great fugue or a great epic can be composed without the inspiration of a theological doctrine, just as a painter of Madonnas need not necessarily be a Catholic.

On the other hand, it may be hazarded that the Protestant, in literature, rarely reveals the same genius for the incongruous and the ironical as does the Catholic. "Dissent," it has been said, "kills the sense of humour." The writer of the greatest English satire was an Irishman: our literature can boast the incisiveness of Dryden and the epigram of Pope, but not the boisterousness of Rabelais, nor the quiet sarcasm of Molière, nor the sustained irony of Anatole France. The achievements of England in what might be called the secondary forms of literature—in satire, epigram, and burlesque—have been

great, but not so great as those of Catholic France, a fact which may have been in the mind of La Bruyère, when he remarked that a man born Christian and French finds himself driven to satire, because "the great subjects are forbidden him." It was the "great subjects" that the Reformers forced on the attention of Europe, and there is still reflected something of their sombre seriousness and high purpose in the temperament and activities of modern Protestant communities.

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